SAGA
JOURNAL
Volume 1
Mythology, Romance, Politics,
Psychology, Ethics, and more
in a Galaxy Far, Far Away…

SAGA JOURNAL

An academic *Star Wars* fan journal

The Saga Journal is a monthly on-line academic review dedicated to the in-depth study of the *Star Wars* saga as presented in George Lucas's six-film series. Our goal is to deliver one of the best collections of scholarly essays on the subject that the internet has to offer.

Here at the Saga Journal, we believe *Star Wars* is more than just an enjoyable space opera set in a galaxy far, far away. We recognize it as a modern myth, a cultural phenomenon all its own. We want to encourage the literary exploration of all aspects of the story as presented in the Prequel and Original Trilogy films.

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Acknowledgments

Volume 1 of the Saga Journal is the result of the combined efforts of many different people.

First, the Editorial Team of the journal, nine fans who embarked on this project out of a love for *Star Wars* and a desire to bring something new, informative, and fun to the fandom. The work of building the website, gathering submissions, writing papers, finding review subjects, and other day-to-day issues of running the website have required a great deal from each of us, and we've all enjoyed it and the fruits of our efforts. Nearly all of us are remaining on the team for the second year, which we anticipate will be even better than the first.

Also, the various contributors to the journal are greatly appreciated. Paper authors who shared their works with us and offered new insights, fans who shared their stories of how they found the saga, website owners whose pages we link to, those who signed our guestbook, or who voted in our polls…all of them have helped make the journal what it is today.

Finally, all the visitors and supporters of the journal and website. We thank you for helping to make the first year a success, and hope you'll stay with us through year two.

Foreword

The first volume of the Saga Journal contains many different ways of looking at the *Star Wars* saga. From studying the Campbellian aspects of Anakin's and Luke's journeys to exploring the different heroic roles that Padmé and Leia play…from the comparison of Anakin's politics with that of Plato to the explanation of how *Return of the Jedi* fits in with historical examples of counter-insurgencies…from highlighting the different roles romance plays in the recent *Spiderman* films versus the first two prequel movies to trying to work out the ethics of Anakin's Tusken slaughter in *Attack of the Clones*…it's all in this issue, along with much, much more.

Aside from the papers, there are also reviews of books, websites, and television specials…stories from fans of all types who founds *Star Wars* at all ages and stages of their lives…and poll results both serious and sublime about pressing questions raised by the saga.

The Editorial Team hopes you enjoy this volume. We've enjoyed bringing it to you over the last year.

Inaugural Issue

December 2004

I Don't Think the System Works: The Politics of Anakin Skywalker

by ami-padme

There are countless ways to explain Anakin Skywalker's fall from grace during the *Star Wars* saga. Issues of temptation and morality, of loss and anger, of impatience and a desire for power all play large roles in the character's turn to the Dark Side. Another issue, connected to those mentioned but still distinct, also has a significant impact on Anakin's journey from an innocent child and noble Jedi to a Sith second-in-command of a tyrannical galactic regime. That issue is Anakin's personal politics – how they developed through his childhood, made him more susceptible to the frustrations of dealing with a troubled democracy in the Galactic Republic, and eventually led him to accepting the idea of the superiority of an Empire.

The circumstances that shaped Anakin's political thinking throughout the prequels and the beliefs drawn from them follow, in several ways, the political theories and thinking of the classical Greek philosopher, Plato. Throughout his works, Plato speaks to the idea that chaos and anarchy inevitably lead to tyranny, expresses concerns about democracy as an effective political system, and advocates an ideal type of aristocratic political leadership. Anakin's politics, a significant piece of the character's journey, are set against a backdrop of fictional governments in a galaxy far, far away, yet still reflect parts of the classical political philosophy of Ancient Greece that Plato espoused.

Anakin Skywalker's childhood on Tatooine has an enormous and critical influence on his political thinking.

Anakin Skywalker's childhood on Tatooine has an enormous and critical influence on his political thinking. Tatooine is essentially a lawless planet, close to anarchy. Controlled by the criminal Hutts during the time of *The Phantom Menace*, the Outer Rim planet practices slavery, is a "[haven] for those who don't wish to be found," and is beyond the reach of the laws and customs of the Republic. Anakin is raised in this environment as a slave, with no freedom; what little security and stability he has is tied to the whims – and sporting bets – of his masters.

The dangerous and volatile nature of Tatooine creates in Anakin a desire for both order and control on a personal level. On a larger, political level, he would have the same priorities, making his future connections between an honorable wish to establish order and seeing the benefits of an Empire (even an oppressive one) more understandable. It is easy to make the connection between wanting to impose order and finding the benefit in an Empire; even when the desire for order comes out of a considerate impulse to provide safety and justice to the population, and even when that Empire is oppressive. In *The Republic*, Plato states, "the truth [is] that the excessive increase of anything often causes a reaction in the opposite direction; and this is the case not only in the seasons and in vegetable and animal life, but above all in forms of government."[1] He specifically addresses the reaction to chaos and anarchy, which he believes is the result of immoderate freedom granted to the population: "The excess of liberty, whether in States or individuals, seems only to pass into excess of slavery…the most aggravated form of tyranny and slavery [arises] out of the most extreme form of liberty."[2] Anakin's character, who in part reacts to an early life on Tatooine by later becoming a representative of an repressive regime, personifies this aspect of Plato's political theory.

A childhood on Tatooine also taught Anakin several negative lessons about the efficacy and integrity of the democratic Galactic Republic. However aware he may or may not have been of the galaxy beyond

the Outer Rim as a small child, by the events of Episode I, at least, he is certainly made aware of several troubling facts. "The Republic doesn't exist out here," his mother tells Padmé, and she's right – ostensibly, the Republic has outlawed slavery, but seems powerless to halt the practice on Tatooine. Criminals and other outcasts from the civilized galaxy come to the desert world to hide, and often to continue their illegal and immoral activities; the Republic is unable to capture or stop them. Even when its representatives, like Jedi Qui-Gon Jinn or Queen Amidala, come face-to-face with Tatooine's problems, there is no expectation that the Republic will take any meaningful action to rectify the situation. Seeing the failures of the Republic in such personal terms on a daily basis no doubt influenced the way Anakin looked at the galactic government, and at the concept of democracy in general. The book, *Plato: Totalitarian or Democrat?*, speaks of the political atmosphere that Plato was raised in, one where the failures of democracy were also on display. "Democracy was only another name for corruption and class-politics," says one of the book's essays, and the philosopher, "heard the savage jeers…at the inefficiency and vulgarity of the jingo democrats."[3] Plato went on to support an aristocratic revolution, and it comes as no surprise that Anakin supported a revolutionary overthrow of democracy himself.

After leaving his homeworld in *The Phantom Menace*, Anakin is raised within the Jedi Order, which is centered at the heart of the Republic on Coruscant. Here, the experiences and beliefs that marked his childhood on Tatooine are reinforced by the deteriorating state of the galaxy, and its government. This decline continues throughout the remainder of the prequel era.

While the Republic is still functioning during the time of *Attack of the Clones*, its slow slide into irrelevancy, chaos, and war continues. Anakin shares his thoughts on politics, government, and the current state of affairs when prompted by Padmé Naberrie. He doesn't "think the system works" and wants to change things so that all the politicians can gather, decide what course of action would best serve their people, and then follow that course of action. Anakin is neither a tyrant nor despot by nature; he wants what's best for the populace, and is frustrated by the inability of the Senate to provide that. For Anakin, the results – getting what needs to be done, done – are more important than the rules, laws, or the process of democracy, especially as he sees that process continually weakening to the people's detriment. He would rather "someone wise" take charge to "make [the politicians] agree" than allow the problems of the galaxy to continue when the government, he believes, has the means to end them.

The idea of "someone wise" having the final authority – over other politicians, over the political process itself – to do the right things and to take necessary actions is similar to Plato's thoughts on the ideal political leader. In the dialogue *Politicus*, Plato says, "Provided that the ruler possesses the art of ruling, he should be free to adapt the laws to his knowledge of the Good."[4] In R.M. Hare's book, *Plato*, it is posited that "Plato thinks the rulers ought not themselves to be bound by the laws, but should be able to alter them ad hoc to fit individual cases, just as a doctor fits his treatment to the condition of each patient," and further, "any attempt to lay down laws by which the rulers themselves were to be bound would lead to an inability to suit measures to particular cases."[5] Plato wants someone "neither pleasure-seeking nor ambitious" but "a true philosopher, alone qualified to rule through his knowledge of the Good."[6] Both he and Anakin, if able to find such a person, would turn over control of the state to them, and feel they have done a measurably positive thing in saving the people from the problems and difficulties found in an often slow-moving democratic system. Unfortunately, both men were disappointed in the "someone wise" they chose to support.

Plato: Totalitarian or Democrat? describes Plato's distress at the inability of those he backed during the aristocratic revolution to fix the problems of the democratic regime: "Up till now he had assumed that everything could be put right only if the gentlemen gained control. Now he realized that 'gentlemen'

could behave worse than the demagogues of the proletariat."[7] Plato himself, in letters written long after the fact laments, "I thought the new regime would substitute the reign of justice for the reign of injustice…And I saw these gentlemen within a very short time make the democracy they had destroyed seem like a golden age!"[8] Likewise, by the time of the Original Trilogy, we find Darth Vader disillusioned with the Empire and actively working to overthrow Emperor Palpatine. He still holds to the same political priorities that he has had since childhood; in trying to convince his son Luke to turn to the Dark Side and join him, Vader tells him, among other things, "Together, we can end this destructive conflict, and bring order to the galaxy." He still values bringing an end to chaos, still believes that a strong person – the right person – can do what is needed for the good of the Empire. But he no longer believes that Palpatine is that person, or that the Empire has effectively governed (or dealt appropriately with the ongoing war against the Alliance). Eventually, as Anakin's moral compass guides him back to the Light, he finally rejects both the Emperor and his Empire. There are many other, and more important, reasons why Vader killed the Emperor, but in the context of the political impact, it is significant that the act is not part of a coup where he and Luke would take over control of the Empire, but instead is a redemptive act that destroys the oppressive government and allows freedom to reign again throughout the Galaxy.

The manner in which Anakin Skywalker's experiences influenced his political beliefs, and the way those beliefs influenced the path his life took are a critical part of understanding his character, his fall, and eventual redemption.

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[1] Plato. *The Republic*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. Galileo, 1995, 106.

[2] Plato, 106.

[3] Thomas Landon Thorson, ed. *Plato: Totalitarian or Democrat?* Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963, 17.

[4] Hare, R.M. *Plato*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, 60-61.

[5] Hare, 60.

[6] Hare, 60.

[7] Thorson, 19.

[8] Thorson, 17.

But It's A Whole Nother Year!
Star Wars as A Seasonal Nature Myth

by FernWithy

One of the hallmarks of a mythic story is its sense of timelessness – of being both long over and perpetually happening. When the story is shared in a community, those hearing it are both learning an ancient tale and participating in it. Perhaps the clearest example of this timelessness is the cycle of seasonal celebrations, with their attendant myths – the death of light and its rekindling at (or near) the winter solstice, the spring rites of renewal, the harvest rites of autumn as the world prepares for winter again. The stories are told in a cycle of narrative, ending only to return to the beginning.

The *Star Wars* narrative fits the seasonal pattern well, beginning in fulsome summer, descending into fiery autumn and barren winter, and finally emerging again in a delicate and joyous spring. Even the release order suggests a cyclical myth – beginning in the middle of the story and cycling back around to the beginning.

But what of the question of *Star Wars* as a myth of morals and self-discovery? It is clearly a morality tale on one level – a cautionary story about the dangers of greed and rage, and a hopeful tale of the virtues of compassion and forgiveness. It is also certainly a coming of age story and a traditional hero's quest for identity. This essay does not dispute either point. To the mythic mindset, however, it is not an either/or question – our morality is reflected in the structures of the natural world, and the cycles of nature hold lessons about the nature of mankind. Thus the celebration of Christmas from Christians is simultaneously a celebration of the return of light to the physical world, the celebration of the perceived historical event of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, and a theological reminder of the "dawn of redeeming grace." Likewise, the Jewish celebration of Passover brings in the renewing green herbs of springtime, recalls the defining event of the liberation from bondage in Egypt, and asks celebrants to consider the question of how we are still bound and redeemed each day.

There are of course no rituals or ceremonies to mark the seasons of the *Star Wars* myth, no designated holidays or traditional foods to be brought out as the seasons come upon us (though of course individual fans may in fact be prone to creating rituals). Divorced from the ritual of practiced religion, the *Star Wars* text itself becomes the celebration, where, as Joseph Campbell wrote, "The wonderful cycle of the year, with its hardships and periods of joy, is celebrated, and delineated, and represented as continued in the life-round of the human group."[1]

The Classic trilogy opens in the dead of winter, the height of the Empire. Its colors are harsh blacks and whites, its landscapes – with the exception of the Rebel Base – barren. Tatooine may be filled with sunlight, but it is a cruel sun that leaves dried bones on the horizon instead of drawing up life from the soil. The watery, temperate-looking world of Alderaan is seen only as it is destroyed. Drab green is as colorful as things get in the Empire, and in the galaxy it has created in its own image. The galaxy lies dormant under an icy heel. By the beginning of *The Empire Strikes Back*, even the rebels are snowbound.

And yet, in the tradition of the Solstice, it is in this darkness that we first see a glimmer of hope (as Episode IV was, in fact, re-titled, *A New Hope*). When we meet Luke he is engaged in moisture farming – trying to bring water and life back to the barren land. The longest night of the year also marks the beginning of the lengthening days, the brightening of the world as it moves toward spring.

In the course of the story, Luke goes to a watery world – a dark, nighttime version of the swamps which gave (will give?) aid to his mother on Naboo, another cyclical allusion. While he is there, he descends briefly into the underworld and gets a piece of information that changes everything, then returns to the world of the sky (Cloud City), where he learns its meaning – he has encountered mother and father, water and air. He emerges from the encounter decisively changed, and the galaxy is ready to change with him.

Luke [goes] deep into the underworld and [redeems] his father…Life has indeed been brought back.

Return of the Jedi marks the return of springtime. Winter still holds sway within the Empire, though even there the scarlet robes of the Emperor's Guard begin to provide a contrast. Most tellingly, the main action of *Jedi* takes place on the verdant moon of Endor, filmed in a forest of delicate shades of new green. The rebels, in camouflage for much of the movie, reflect this rising theme, while the Empire, powerful though it may be, is visually overwhelmed from the first glimpse of the bunker.

Although the movie again begins on seasonless Tatooine, it is no longer that Tatooine of stoic farmers and malfunctioning vaporators – it is the Tatooine of Jabba the Hutt, debauched and filthy, but deeply sensual. It is here that Leia brings her love back from the dead, the first of many spring symbols that appear in the movie.[2] After this prologue, the action moves to Endor, where we encounter not only the greens of the landscape, but the Ewoks, the first creatures in the saga shown in family groups that include infants and small children. Leia takes her hair down, a freeing of the feminine energy, which has been/will be destroyed in the course of the prequel trilogy's role in the cycle.

Most importantly, Luke repeats the theme of rescue and redemption by going deep into the underworld and redeeming his father, who has been enslaved there, and whose power will return balance to the Force. Significantly, this has traditionally been the role not of the son, but of the queen-consort. Ishtar seeks Tammuz, Isis seeks Osiris, and – not incidentally – Leia seeks Han. It is not unreasonable to see Luke in his role in *Return of the Jedi* as an avatar not of Anakin, but of Padmé, who presides over the "summer" of the saga.

As the Classic trilogy draws to a close, the characters are gathered on the forest moon, celebrating their victory with song, dance and fireworks. The stormtroopers' helmets are played as drums and pilots pantomime the stories of their daring escapes. As this is happening, Luke carries the mechanical shell of his father's body to the edge of the celebration, and burns it on a great pyre. The sparks meld back into the fireworks, and the fireworks into the galactic celebration.

This is very reminiscent of springtime rituals. James George Frazer, in The Golden Bough, reports that in parts of Bohemia, "they carry Death to the end of the village, singing...Behind the village they erect a pyre, on which they burn the straw figure, reviling and scoffing at it the while. Then they return, singing:

We have carried away Death
And brought Life back.
He has taken up his quarters in the village
Therefore sing joyous songs."[3]

Of course, when Luke himself returns to the village after carrying death away, he is welcomed by his joyful friends, and he looks across to see Yoda, Obi-Wan, and Anakin (young again in the DVD release)

looking on from the past, hovering over a green and misty world – a primeval beginning – as the joyous songs go on around him. Life has indeed been brought back.

When we rejoin the saga, time has been both pushed forward and rolled back. On the most obvious level, we find ourselves thirty-two years *before* the events of *A New Hope* have taken place, but seasonally, we are further along in the year.

The Phantom Menace is drenched in the bright, vibrant colors of summer. When we encounter Naboo, it is fresh and lush, a high and fertile summer with its young girl-queen/demigoddess as its symbol. Unlike Dagobah, the swamps of Naboo have clear water and bright skies. Even dusty, drab Tatooine is shot not as a barren place, but as a land of golden sand and cheerful sunlight. It is here that we meet the slave Anakin, who has great potential and is loved by powerful forces (the Jedi, Padmé). It is also, however, a fragile, temporary galaxy. The days are shortening; a major scene between Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan takes place in the red light of a gaudy Coruscant sunset. Threats are suppressed unnaturally, by a kind of willful blindness that keeps the good people battling phantoms while evil is taking root at the heart of the Republic. The bounty of the galaxy is barely held in check, and evil forces are ignored, in hiding rather than defeated. Like ancient kings trying to avoid the fulfillment of a prophecy – Acrisius hiding his daughter Danae so she wouldn't bear a son who would kill him, or Laius and Jocasta exposing the infant Oedipus on a mountaintop – they believe that they can preserve the status quo indefinitely. "This is a typical reaction of the old male energy," Victor MacGill writes of Acrisius. "...He thinks he can lock the problem away, but we cannot lock things away for ever in our unconscious world, just as the King could not keep Sleeping Beauty away from the spindle forever. Whatever is unnaturally controlled and suppressed will always find a way to reappear."[4]

By the time the saga moves on to *Attack of the Clones*, the color scheme has changed. There is more brown, more rust color. Autumn is in the air, just around the corner. Natural dangers are highlighted – the parasites Zam uses to attack Padmé, the violent storms on Kamino, the beasts in the arena. The romance comes to fullness here, in the waning days of summer, as autumn closes in. Patricia C. Wrede's juvenile novelization of the screenplay brings this into sharp focus with its final sentence, as Anakin kisses Padmé at their secret wedding, and she thinks, "There was only Anakin, and the scent of the dying roses in the garden below."[5]

Attack of the Clones marks the beginning of the season of death, with the bloody deaths of three women (Cordé the handmaiden, the bounty hunter Zam Wessell, and most prominently, Anakin's mother, Shmi Skywalker) heralding the end of the fertile summer.

As story moves inexorably toward Anakin's fall, another common harvest myth evoked – the dying god, who is killed and dismembered only to rise again with the crops in the spring. Like John Barleycorn of American legend, he is hacked apart a bit at a time. Perhaps the most famous of the dying gods, Tammuz (also known as Dumuzi and Adonis), was the consort of Ishtar (or, in the Greek take on the myth, Aphrodite). Each year, he was killed, and each year, the goddess descended into the underworld to retrieve him. While she was gone, she took the fertility of the Earth with her. While Anakin sojourns in the underworld, trapped in a modernistic version of a live burial, the galaxy again falls into winter, where we began, and the twins will be born of summer as the hope for spring to return.

Notes and Works Cited:

[1] Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. (Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, USA). Second edition, 1968. Pg. 384.

[2] The imagery of Leia's rescue of Han is strikingly similar to the description of Isis finding her husband Osiris trapped in a casket after seeking him all day as a sparrow hawk. As related by Geraldine McCaughrean, "Her feet felt the beat of a heart through the inlaid lid. Not dead yet, then! Half mad with hope, she pecked furiously. Her beek made a hole. The soul of Osiris struggled like a flame through that hole and singed the fathers of the sparrow hawk!"

McCaughrean, Geraldine. *The Crystal Pool*. (Margaret K. McElderry Books, New York, 1998). Pg. 52.

[3] Frazer, Sir James George. *The Golden Bough*. (Macmillan, New York, 1922.) First Touchstone edition, 1996. Pg. 360.

[4] MacGill, Victor. "Perseus and Andromeda." *When the Dragon Stirs*
(http://www.vmacgill.net/perseus.htm)

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The Journey As Applied To The Adventures of Luke Skywalker: Special Edition

by lazypadawan

Foreword: *I originally wrote this paper in 1990 for a seminar-type class called the Mythic Image. It was originally called "The Journey As Applied To The Star Wars Trilogy" but now that the saga has expanded beyond one trilogy, I've retitled it and given it the "Special Edition" treatment.*

Everyone at one point in life must seek out an identity of his or her own if that person is to successfully pass from adolescence to adulthood. This psychological journey entails encountering fears and overcoming them, resisting material and spiritual temptations to stray away from the quest, gaining in experience and knowledge, and becoming in harmony with the forces of nature – good and bad – within yourself.

This process is extremely painful, since the adolescent must separate from all that is safe and familiar, especially the family. You are worthy of becoming a separate entity if you can withstand the pain of separation and initiation. Once you have completed initiation, the family structure changes to accept you as an adult and an equal worthy of respect.

Such is the psychological journey Luke Skywalker must endure over the course of Episodes IV-VI of the saga. At the very beginning of *A New Hope*, Luke is a total innocent trapped in a boring existence as a moisture farmer on a desolate, remote world. Outside of this small world, the whole galaxy is in turmoil over the war between the Empire and the Alliance. Luke knows nothing of the galaxy at large, not to mention what pure good or evil are. In this way he is like the Celtic hero Conneda; naive and powerless because he has not experienced anything outside of his own small existence.[1]

Luke dreams of leaving the moisture farm and taking off for the stars, much the way young boys dream of traveling the world. Luke's wish comes true, but in a way he does not expect. A holographic message from a mysterious young girl pleading for help (conveyed through R2D2) is his call to adventure.

It isn't until Artoo vanishes that Luke experiences his first trial. He goes out on his own from the homestead in order to retrieve the droid along with another droid that will become part of Luke's new family structure, Threepio. On this first adventure, Luke is attacked by Sand People, otherwise known as Tusken Raiders. This short scene makes the viewer aware that once Luke leaves the relative safety of his home he faces dangers and he faces pain. However, because he is inexperienced even in the shadow realms of his own world, he cannot save himself. He loses consciousness and is rescued by Obi-Wan "Ben" Kenobi, an old hermit who had once been a Jedi Knight and a hero in the Clone Wars.

In *Hero of a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell notes that the first encounter of the hero-journey is with "a protective figure (often a little old crone or an old man) who provides the adventurer with amulets against the dragon forces he is about to pass."[2] Obi-Wan is such a figure, who not only is the next link to Luke's past and future, he provides Luke with the skills he will need to survive the trials ahead of him, and he bestows upon him a talisman.

Luke learns from the old wise man where his true identity and his destiny lie. He learns his "dead" father wasn't a navigator on a freighter, but a Jedi Knight. He learns that the Jedi Knights were guardians of peace and justice in the millennia before the Empire, and that they had been wiped out. Luke for the first time has a connection to his past and through his father's identity as a Jedi, he is revealed to have a

greater potential than he had ever dreamed possible. And for the first time, Luke gains paternal role models who will guide him toward this potential: Obi-Wan and his biological father Anakin. Telemachus adopts his father Odysseus as a role model the same way, through second-hand information, since Odysseus had been gone for all of Telemachus's life. Unlike Telemachus, who had been raised an orphan alone with his mother Penelope, Luke already had a paternal figure in his Uncle Owen.[3] However, Owen is a threshold guardian, one who keeps the hero from advancing in his journey. It is not to say he is a villain. In fact, he provides Luke the moral upbringing and stability that aids him on his quest. But he is determined to shield Luke from his potential, perhaps out of fear the Empire will find Luke or that Luke will share the same fate as his father Anakin.

This initial meeting with Obi-Wan is the also the first time Luke learns about the Force, which Obi-Wan describes as an energy that "flows through all living things...it sustains us...and binds the galaxy together." There is a light side, which is the creative, benevolent side that is tempered with conscience and reason. The Jedi use the light side to defend and support life, not for random destruction or personal gain. The dark side is the non-rational animal instinct, based on anger, fear, aggression, and other primal emotions. It is described as being "quick" and "seductive," without the virtues of patience and reason.

A New Hope is in many ways a film about the older generation handing the sword over to a new generation and this happens literally when Obi-Wan gives Luke his father's lightsaber. This is another connection to Luke's past as well as a promise of Luke's future should he fulfill his potential. The lightsaber is a talisman. Unlike most talismans such as the One Ring that has a magical power unto itself, the lightsaber is more a symbol of the Jedi, a reminder of Luke's aspirations and his heritage. For Luke, becoming a Jedi is becoming an adult. To do this, he must leave behind his old life. He must go out to be initiated and discover the light and dark side within himself.

After seeing Princess Leia's message, Obi-Wan asks Luke to travel with him to Alderaan. This is another call to adventure, but Luke balks at leaving his aunt and uncle behind. For all of his dreams of leaving Tatooine, he finds that when given the opportunity, he can't bring himself to go. This is known as the refusal of the call. Campbell says, "What they represent is an impotence to put off the infantile ego, with its sphere of emotional relationships and ideals. One is bound in by the walls of childhood; the father and mother stand as threshold guardians, and the timorous soul, fearful of some punishment, fails to make the passage through the door and come to birth without."[4]

The saga could have just ended right there, but Luke's decision to take the journey is made for him when Imperial troops kill Aunt Beru and Uncle Owen, giving him no other choice but to leave the planet with Obi-Wan. His family's death is the first of many separations Luke must experience over the course of his journey. It is painful, but necessary in order for Luke to take his first significant step forward.

His next trial is when he enters the shadow world of Mos Eisley. It's a place rife with danger from the Empire and from the rough characters who inhabit the town. Luke enters the literal underworld of the cantina on a staircase leading down, although at this point he is an innocent and still needs Obi-Wan's protection from the cantina patrons. It is here they encounter new companions, Han Solo and Chewbacca. Chewbacca is the classic loyal sidekick and instantly we know he is a character Luke can trust. Han is more comfortable in the shady surroundings of the cantina and his costume even reflects moral ambiguity with black, dark blue, and white.

When Luke leaves Tatooine with his new companions, he still needs Obi-Wan's guidance as well as the protection of Han and Chewbacca. Luke may be an able pilot, but in the "larger world" into which he has made his first steps, he is a neophyte. Luke relies upon others until he discovers the princess is being

held captive aboard the Death Star. For the first time since leaving home, he takes the initiative in his adventure. He persuades a skeptical Han Solo and Chewbacca to join him and plan the rescue. This leads to his next trial, rescuing the princess and escaping the Death Star. The rescue and escape are fraught with setbacks, dangers, and overcoming impossible odds, but because this new fellowship of sorts works so well together, they are able to succeed. This entire sequence builds the strong friendship among the four characters. But it is not without cost. Luke experiences the loss of his new father figure Obi-Wan, who dies battling Darth Vader. Obi-Wan sacrifices himself to save Luke and his friends.

Luke's final trial in *A New Hope* is the attack on the Death Star. Once again he experiences separation. He is without most of his new friends and many of his fellow pilots perish in the battle, including his old friend Biggs. Artoo is damaged and Luke's targeting computer isn't working. Here he must put faith in his own abilities. Even though Obi-Wan's voice gently guides him and even though Han Solo helps him at the last minute by clearing the way for Luke to destroy the Death Star, it's ultimately up to Luke to accomplish the task.

A New Hope tests Luke's worthiness of becoming a Jedi. Various situations, like rescuing Princess Leia from the detention block, destroying TIE fighters in pursuit, or participating in an attack on the Death Star, test Luke's bravery and belief in himself. For if he lets fear and self-doubt interfere, he succumbs to the animal instinct. It would be easy for him to be irresponsible, to give up, and turn away from his goal of knighthood.

By the end of *A New Hope*, Luke endures danger as well as the pain of separation and of loss. However, Obi-Wan remains a guiding force. He advises Luke as he attacks the Death Star, and Luke sees his spectral form in the next two films.

The rescue and escape are fraught with setbacks, dangers, and overcoming impossible odds, but because this new fellowship of sorts works so well together, they are able to succeed.

Otherwise, Luke is not completely alone on his path. Adolescents often use their peers as family. Luke's friends give him help and encouragement, but they can also be seen as physical manifestations of his personality. For example, Han Solo represents the thrill-seeking, free, and rebellious side. Threepio is a comical caricature of Luke's fears and self-doubts. Princess Leia, who is Luke's twin sister, represents Luke's anima, the "unconscious contrasexual side of the male psyche," according to Steven Gallipeau's glossary in *The Journey of Luke Skywalker*.[5]

As the only main female character in Episodes IV-VI, Leia serves as what Carl Jung called "the archetype of life" and "the archetype of all divine mothers."[6] Her maternality is manifested through her high position in society and in the Alliance's leadership hierarchy. She represents the fullest extent of what Luke could be: confident, powerful, compassionate, and just. As his anima, she motivates him throughout *A New Hope*. Her message encourages him to seek out Obi-Wan. Her presence on the Death Star allows him to truly prove himself for the first time. She comforts him and brings him back to the moment after Obi-Wan dies, and it is for her cause he risks his life in battling the Death Star.

The most important relationship, however, is the relationship between Luke and Darth Vader, which is addressed for the first time in *The Empire Strikes Back*. This chapter in the saga tests Luke as he has never been tested before. As Vader tells him, "Obi-Wan has trained you well…but you are not a Jedi yet."

Luke's faces his first trial at the very beginning of the film when he is attacked by the Wampa creature and taken back to its cave. The audience realizes very quickly that despite Luke's triumphs in *A New Hope*, his improved skills with a lightsaber, and his increased use of the Force, he is humbled by the shadow creature of a hostile world, which he barely manages to escape. The spirit of Obi-Wan appears to him to seek further training from Yoda, indicating he has far to go in his journey to become a Jedi and a man. It is up to Han to assist him and save his life when he is stranded out in the frozen wasteland. Luke still needs the guidance and protection of others.

His next trial occurs during the Empire's attack on the Alliance's base. Luke loses his gunner in the attack, crashes, and nearly loses his life. He is able to heroically bring down some of the AT-ATs but the most he has been able to accomplish in this battle is delay the Empire long enough for his friends to escape. He then endures the separation from his new family as he goes on to Dagobah while his friends flee the Empire.

On Dagobah, Luke endures his next test when he first encounters Yoda. The diminutive Jedi Master comes across as a nuisance, ransacking through Luke's belongings, fighting with Artoo, and otherwise pushing Luke's patience. Not surprisingly, Yoda recognizes some of the Skywalker temper present in Luke and it takes some urging from Obi-Wan's spirit before Yoda agrees to train him. The short training scenes reveal that the physical training is arduous, pushing Luke to his limits. But nothing is more difficult for Luke than the spiritual challenges he faces on Dagobah because for the first time, Luke realizes his own potential for evil.

Yoda tells Luke to go inside the cave that is with the Dark Side. This is Luke's journey into the subconscious. The entire scene has a nightmare-like quality to it, shot in slow-motion. There he encounters Vader, a figure representing all that is evil and irrational: fear, anger, and aggression. A lightsaber duel ensues, and Luke decapitates Vader. The mask pops off the severed head and Luke sees his own face staring back at him. Not only is it clue for the revelation later in the film, it's a warning of what Luke could become if he is not wary.

As difficult as his time is on Dagobah, Luke gains another father figure in Yoda. Yoda provides guidance, wisdom, a link to Luke's past, and the key to Luke becoming a Jedi. He is the first one to teach Luke to use one's own power judiciously.

The visions Luke experiences on Dagobah of his friends' suffering lead him to his next trial. Yoda and Obi-Wan advise him not to go but they leave the decision up to Luke.

Luke walks into a trap at Cloud City, forcing him into a confrontation with the man he believes killed his father and killed Obi-Wan. But, Vader reveals he is Luke's biological father. The vision he had of what his father was turns out to be false. This is another painful loss for Luke. The horrifying separation of his hand from his body by the father – the hand holding Anakin's lightsaber! – visually expresses this soul-rending pain. He must accept now that his father is alive and evil. He must also accept that a mentor he trusted deeply, Obi-Wan, lied to him. Even with the weight of events, Luke makes one final decision, a likely death over the false promises of power from Vader. From this moment on, Luke must again rely on the protection of others, specifically his friends.

The Empire Strikes Back is Luke's major initiation through pain and loss of innocence. He experiences demanding training under Yoda, he is separated from his friends, his close friend is captured and frozen in carbonite, he learns his archenemy is his father, the Alliance loses its base to the Empire, and he loses his hand while fighting Vader. In Gracia Fay Ellwood's essay on the plots of Romance, the Descent

"means increasing loss of identity: loss of relationships, especially with parents and beloved; fear, suffering, often imprisonment – becoming an object."[7] This film marks the beginning of Luke's descent.

The loss of Luke's hand has more than one implication. It has been described as a symbolic castration.[8] In many societies, circumcision is a form of symbolic castration. By enduring the pain and resisting the fear of true castration, the adolescent becomes a man. Luke takes further steps to becoming a Jedi by resisting fear and not turning away from his quest in spite of all the bad things that happen to him.

Luke receives a mechanical hand to replace the one that was cut off. This symbolizes that Darth Vader, who is "more machine than man" is a part of Luke and Vader's capacity for evil is Luke's as well. At the same time, Luke also realizes the goodness in himself must still exist in his father. After all, if Vader was absolutely evil, how could there be any good in his son? The audience realizes this ember of goodness too, since he resisted the idea of executing Leia in *A New Hope* and convinces the Emperor to spare Luke's life in *The Empire Strikes Back*. Vader's subdued reaction to his son's escape in Empire also indicates the facade of evil has perhaps begun to crack.

When Luke first appears in *Return of the Jedi*, he is dressed in a dark cloak and the audience notes his demeanor has changed since we last saw him in *The Empire Strikes Back*. He seems mature, self-assured, calm, and very Jedi-like. He bravely enters another shadow world, Jabba the Hutt's palace, to help rescue Han Solo. Luke in this sequence acts without doubt or fear, even when most of his friends have been captured and he is faced with seeing a scantily-clad Leia chained to Jabba. When Jabba drops him into the rancor pit, Luke successfully defeats the beast, even when victory means having to be a captive for a time. Jabba brings his prisoners out of the shadow world and into the light, and finally Luke is able to act. The heroes destroy Jabba and his minions and lose their enemy Boba Fett in the process. Luke is ready for knighthood.

Or is he? The very first thing Luke does when confronted with the Gamorrean guards inside Jabba's stronghold is strangle them with the Force until they stand down. Luke also threatens Jabba more than once with lines like, "You will be destroyed" and "Free us or die." When the film was originally released, one would not have thought much of this behavior. After all, Luke is a hero. But the prequels have shown that none of the other Jedi – Obi-Wan, Yoda, Mace Windu, Qui-Gon Jinn – strangle or threaten anyone even under the most dire of circumstances. The only character we've seen act this way is Darth Vader. Luke is dressed head to toe in black and after his prosthetic hand is shot, he covers up the injury with a black leather glove. This is a reminder that Luke is still vulnerable to his own potential for evil and he has yet to surmount the one obstacle to knighthood, confronting Vader.

Yoda tells him as much when Luke visits him on Dagobah. Yoda confirms that Vader told him the truth about his parentage in *The Empire Strikes Back*. This revelation inspires hope but it also inspires new fears and doubts in Luke's mind. Before Yoda dies in *Return of the Jedi*, he tells Luke he must confront his father if he is to become a Jedi. This is his final trial. The ghostly form of Obi-Wan tells him the same thing. Luke says, "I can't kill my own father," although no one actually tells him he must kill Vader.

Luke tends to gain substitute father figures throughout his quest, but they die off as Luke gets closer to discovering his true father, and himself. Suffering the loss of so many weighs on Luke and he may not be able to survive emotionally losing the father he'd long ago admired.

For Luke, this confrontation with Vader is the ultimate test. He must not let his fears of his own death, parricide, and failure prevent him from facing the Dark Lord. Hamlet had a similar problem with

confronting and killing Claudius, his uncle and step-father, and his procrastination had disastrous results. If Luke is to pass this trial, he must go alone into the netherworld.

Once Luke realizes he cannot put off this confrontation any longer, he leaves his friends behind on Endor and surrenders to the Imperials. He confronts Vader again and not only does he acknowledge Vader as his father, he asks Vader to reject evil and repent. Vader refuses, saying almost sadly, "It is too late for me, son." Luke is then taken to the Emperor's throne room in the Death Star. It is the center of evil in the universe despite its spartan and modern setting. The room is mostly dark and shadowy. It is the final descent into the netherworld for Luke.

The Emperor does his best to get Luke to submit to anger, fear, and aggression by taunting and goading him with threats. Luke resists until the Emperor reveals he tricked the Alliance into thinking the "fully armed and operational" Death Star was unable to defend itself. Luke loses his temper, retrieves his lightsaber, and begins fighting Vader, who remains the Emperor's loyal slave. Luke regains his calm temporarily, until Vader discovers he has a daughter and threatens to turn her over to the Dark Side.

This threat exposes Luke's greatest vulnerability, his love for his sister. He sees this as a violation against his own anima, against everything that is pure and life-giving. He flies at Vader in a fury. This time, Luke does the maiming when he chops off Vader's mechanical hand. Luke looks at his own mechanical hand, ensconced in a black glove, and realizes he has given in to anger and fear. At last it hits Luke that he is just a lightsaber stroke away from taking Vader's place at the Emperor's side.

The Emperor encourages Luke to kill Vader, but Luke tosses away his lightsaber. "No...I am a Jedi, like my father before me," he tells the Emperor. Luke chooses life over death, compassion over revenge, the greater good over his own emotions. It is at this moment, he truly becomes a Jedi. He has fully realized the darkness within himself and he has the confidence to keep it under control, even in the face of fear, anger, and death.

The Emperor reacts to this with fury and tries to kill Luke. But Vader is inspired by his son's maturation. He is reminded of what he had been and what he could have become had his choices been different. Undoubtedly, a latent love for his wife Padmé influenced him as well. Vader learns from Luke that he is not only able to make choices, he also has the freedom to act upon them. He seizes the Emperor and kills him but not without becoming mortally wounded.

Vader asks Luke to remove the dark mask, the facade of evil, to reveal his true self. Vader then dies, but it is the final separation Luke experiences. He has helped his father re-discover himself, and he has learned that he is strong enough to resist the Dark Side. The funeral pyre scene is symbolic, not only of Anakin's spirit being freed for good, but also of Luke leaving behind the last vestiges of his adolescent fears and anxieties. *Return of the Jedi* is mostly about Anakin's redemption but it is also about Luke finally becoming his own man. His independence is stressed throughout the film, from his mode of dress to the lightsaber he crafted himself to the way he always made his own choices, whether it's rescuing Han, redeeming his father, or rejecting Palpatine's temptations to give into anger. It is his ability to make his own choices and act upon them, along with his love, that finally inspires the Chosen One to fulfill his prophecy.

Now, Luke is allowed to rejoin the new family structure and his community. The final scenes of *Return of the Jedi* resemble a family reunion. Not only is Luke reunited with his sister and his friends, the father figures of Yoda, Obi-Wan, and Anakin are all present as well, forever a part of Luke's psyche and his heart. This scene symbolizes his return to the family after passing initiation and gaining a new identity.

It also symbolizes the unity and maturity of all facets of Luke's personality. Leia blossoms into a woman, almost an earth-mother type figure by the end, while Han rejects his selfish and cynical ways to finally believe in something bigger than himself.
To become an adult, one must experience many painful separations and tests. You must come to know the bad as well as the good inside yourself, the creative as well as the destructive. The evil will not "go away." The darkness must exist for there to be light, so that you realize the difference between them. You must not be afraid to confront this dark side, although the temptation to hide from it may be hard to resist. You must face up to the responsibility, or the journey will never be completed.

Luke accepts the tests and separations bravely, and he fights his fears and doubts. He comes to know his own goodness and darkness, and through that, he completes the journey successfully.

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The Way of the Jedi: a Comparison of the Jedi Order to the Japanese Samurai

by Reihla

Most die-hard *Star Wars* fans have spent their share of time thinking about the premise behind the creation of George Lucas's Jedi Order. Intentional or not, I believe the Jedi bear more than a passing resemblance to many medieval military orders. The argument is often presented that the Jedi were patterned after the samurai warriors of Japan. I believe that while the two orders share many traits, there are significant differences as well. This paper will explore these traits and provide a realistic look at which characteristics they have in common as well as the ones that set them apart.

We aren't told much in the *Star Wars* films about the origins of the Jedi Order. What little we do know is summarized in the words of Jedi Master Obi-Wan Kenobi: "For over a thousand generations, the Jedi were the guardians of peace and justice in the Old Republic."[1] Over two full decades later, when Lucas introduced the prequel trilogy, that same early ideal was reaffirmed by the glimpses we were given into the Jedi lifestyle and purpose. To further confirm the original role of the Jedi we need only listen to Master Mace Windu succinctly describe the order as "keepers of the peace, not soldiers."[2] From these references it is easy to assume that the Jedi are devoted to the elimination of conflict through non-confrontational means.

In contrast, the samurai were strictly a warrior class, finding their origins from the highest of the four Japanese social classes: samurai, farmers, craftspeople, and traders.[3] In a medieval Japan marked by civil war, the feudalist government consisted, in simple terms, of a shogun that ruled over the daimyo, his provincial lords. To preserve order and assist with tax collection, the daimyo hired numerous samurai. In exchange for their services and unwavering loyalty, the samurai were given wealth and lands. Later on, their purpose evolved from peacekeeping to protecting the interests of the daimyo and serving in regional military coalitions.[4]

While feudalism doesn't translate directly into Lucas's galaxy far, far away, there are some similarities in social structure between medieval Japan and the world of the Jedi. Both the Jedi and the samurai are widely respected, with common citizens often seeking them out for assistance. It is obvious that both orders serve the greater good of their governing bodies, the Jedi through their own Council to the Republic and the samurai to the shogunate through the daimyo.

Initially, at least, the samurai purpose – the preservation of order – seemed to coincide with that of the Jedi. Their methods, however, tend to set them apart in that the samurai were far more militaristic. It was rare that the samurai were called upon to attempt negotiation before employing more violent methods.

Despite the best intentions of the Jedi, in Lucas's fictional galaxy their preferred pacifist tactics often failed to achieve the desired results. At times like these we see the warrior side of the Jedi emerge. As skilled swordsmen, they are capable of gaining victory over numerous armed opponents using only their lightsabers. Although they prefer more peaceful means of conflict resolution, they do not hesitate to proceed to "aggressive negotiations" by using exceptional swordsmanship to get their point across.[5]

Although they prefer more peaceful means of conflict resolution, [Jedi] do not hesitate to proceed to "aggressive negotiations" by using exceptional swordsmanship to get their point across.

In addition to their extraordinary hand-to-hand combat skills, the Jedi possess a strong spiritual side. They are followers of the Force, which is defined in the *Star Wars* universe as a mystical energy field that wraps around all living beings. The Force imbues a Jedi with a number of psychic powers: telepathy, which can be used to exercise a measure of control over those who are weak minded, and telekinesis, to maneuver their physical surroundings. These talents serve them well in many situations, from negotiation to dueling and from piloting to command.

Unlike the fictional Jedi, the samurai were not known telepaths, however, they too possessed a strong spiritual side. As an order, they had no specific religion by which they defined themselves, but by the latter middle ages the majority were practitioners of Zen Buddhism.[6] Like the Jedi, they spent a great deal of time meditating at the temple, the main philosophical difference being that the Jedi are seekers of peace, whereas the samurai sought enlightenment and discipline.

Regardless of their individual religious practices, all samurai followed a collection of guidelines for behavior known as the bushido code . Adherence to bushido "the way of the warrior" meant a samurai had to be willing to die to protect his daimyo. It is worth noting that most considered themselves dead already.[7] This attitude suited them well, as they were required to do anything their lord asked, including enter mortal combat at a moment's notice. Such loyalty towards one's lord was the foundation of bushido.[8] This single-minded loyalty and willingness to die for duty are definitely traits the samurai and Jedi share. In fact, the characteristics are hallmarks of the Jedi Order throughout the *Star Wars* saga.

One particular samurai, Yamamoto Tsunetomo (1659-1719), scribed a collection of thoughts throughout his lifetime that is still considered an authoritative source on the philosophies of the medieval samurai. Many times in his work, the *Hagakure*, Yamamoto implores, "Be true to the thought of the moment and avoid distraction."[9] This phrase, is strikingly similar to the words spoken by Qui-Gon Jinn in Episode I, when he urges Obi-Wan to "Keep your concentration here and now."[10] The same philosophy is evident in Master Yoda when he almost refused to train Luke Skywalker because "all his life he has looked away to the future. Never his mind on where he was. What he was doing."[11]

Those instances are just few of many wonderful parallels that can be drawn from Yamamoto's tenets. Another fine example can be found in the phrase: "Even a person who is good for nothing and exceedingly clumsy will be a reliable retainer if only he has the determination to think earnestly of his master."[12] That quote does much to sum up Qui-Gon's attitude towards the awkward character of Jar Jar Binks. It could also explain his askance look at Obi-Wan when the latter refers to Jar Jar as "another pathetic life form."[13]

Perhaps the most intriguing coincidence between the samurai and the Jedi is the concept of the Force. Obi-Wan Kenobi explains the Force as the thing that gives a Jedi his power: "It's an energy field created by all living beings. It surrounds us and penetrates us; it binds the galaxy together." The samurai also acknowledge a mystical life energy, the ki (or qi, or chi). They drew on it for strength and used it for a variety of purposes, including healing.[14]

Although this concept of a mystical energy field is one that both Jedi and samurai share, their reliance upon it differs in one key area. Mystical life energy has nothing to do with how someone becomes a samurai. Samurai are born to their position through wealth and station. In between times of military service, they married, raised families and owned lands. In contrast, a Jedi candidate had to possess latent Force using abilities as well as the quantifiable physical characteristic of a high midi-chlorian count (determined by blood test) to be accepted into the order. Once accepted, they were denied all contact with their natural families and taught that possession and attachment were forbidden.[15]

Another fascinating coincidence between the samurai and the Jedi is their choice of weaponry and the extensive training required to gain proficiency in its use. Both orders selected elegant swords that were so unique and finely crafted as to be outside the purview of the average citizen. We learn through young Anakin Skywalker's observations in Episode I that "only Jedi carry that kind of weapon." Most likely this was true as each lightsaber was crafted by its owner.

For the samurai, the daisho, a pair of gracefully curved swords made by master craftsmen, were the weapons of choice. The shorter of the two blades was known as the dai-to, or wakizashi, and the longer blade was the sho-to, or katana.[16] So honored were these weapons that in 1587 shogun Hideyoshi decreed that only samurai would be allowed to carry the daisho. This restriction succeeded in making the sword pair a universal symbol for the samurai.[17] The same phenomenon holds true of the lightsaber, even though such a weapon doesn't exist outside of fiction. In today's society, one can't see a laser sword or hear its characteristic hum without thinking of *Star Wars* and Jedi Knights.

It is also worth mentioning the strong similarities between traditional garb of the Jedi and the samurai. Both are comprised of several tunics of various materials arranged in layers across the wearer's chest and then bound by a cloth waistband. The Jedi garb so obviously resembles the historical Japanese kamishimo sugata that the influence of the traditional samurai garb on Lucas's costume designers cannot be ignored.[18]

The final comparison between these two orders – that of their decline – has yet to be seen. The Jedi are destined to fall, as any *Star Wars* fan surely knows, but the method of their destruction has not yet come to light. We are given hints throughout the *Star Wars* films that pride, arrogance and overconfidence among the leadership are at least partly to blame. We also know that evil Sith warriors, corrupt Force users, will have a hand in eradicating the Order. These things will be confirmed or not when Episode III: *Revenge of the Sith* is released in theaters in 2005.

If rumors are true, there is one thing we can be fairly certain of at this point. The downfall of the samurai does not mirror that of the Jedi in that it was not due to war or conflict. In fact, if anything, peace made the samurai obsolete. The last shogun resigned his leadership in 1867 and the Emperor was installed as Japan's formal leader. Ultimately the Emperor purchased the lands of the daimyo and even went so far as to ban the samurai from carrying their swords. In 1877, Saigo Takamori, one of the last samurai, led a small group of warriors in open rebellion against the might of the Emperor's forces. Before the final battle, however, Takamori realized the odds were insurmountable and committed ritual suicide rather than sacrifice what remained of his forces and submit to capture.[19]

This act of seppuku, ritual suicide, was commonplace among samurai defeated on the field of battle. It is something we do not see in the Jedi Order. No matter how grave the odds against them, the Jedi seem to prefer living to fight another day. Even so, there is one aspect of death the samurai and the Jedi have in common. Another samurai philosopher, Miyamoto Musashi, once wrote, "generally speaking, the Way of the Warrior is the resolute acceptance of death."[20] Those words ring true many times in *Star Wars* films, most notably with the deaths of four prominent Jedi: Qui-Gon Jinn, Yoda, Obi-Wan Kenobi and even the redeemed Anakin Skywalker. None of these Jedi feared death when it came to them. Indeed, they all faced it bravely, as true and honorable warriors.

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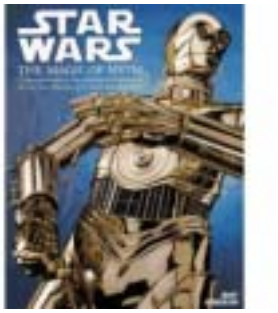
Recommendation

Beginning the Journey



Title: *Star Wars*: The Magic of Myth
Author: Mary Henderson
ISBN: 0-553-10206-0; paperback 0-553-37810-4
Publisher: Bantam
Copyright: 1997

Reviewed by Fern Withy.

The Magic of Myth, Mary Henderson's companion volume to exhibit of the same name at the Smithsonian Institute's NASA Museum, is the best starting point available for someone new to the mythological aspects of the classic *Star Wars* trilogy.

The book is separated into three sections. "*Star Wars* and Classic Mythology" compares Luke Skywalker's story with the traditional stories by which Lucas was influenced (including King Arthur, Siegfried, the *Odyssey*, *The Divine Comedy*, and others), and "The Makings of Modern Myth" looks at more modern influences (including cowboys, the second world war, technological horror, and more). The final section, "Mythic Images," studies how Lucas used visual imagery to evoke these archetypes.

As an introduction to the *Star Wars* mythology, *Magic of Myth* is fantastic. Unlike many books on the subject, it presupposes no knowledge of the comparative subject matter, and gives succinct explanations of its references. Henderson walks readers through the traditional stories, historical references, and theoretical work without ever becoming overbearing, including a good overview of the work of mythologist Joseph Campbell, whose ideas had a profound influence on Lucas's work. The chapter taking us through the Hero's Journey portrays not only Luke's journey, but its analogues in myth – the guarded thresholds, the mentors' gifts, the refusals of adventure. The studies of visual imagery are fantastic, breaking down why choices were made and what they meant to evoke, including pictures both of the *Star Wars* props and costumes and the historical costumes which inspired them. The large, full-color pictures allow the reader to see how well those choices work.

Henderson's book is introductory and doesn't explore the many issues it raises in great depth, but hey...that leaves room for the rest of us.

Discovering *Star Wars*

ami-padme

My father is a huge *Star Wars* fan, so Episodes IV and V simply always existed as far as I knew; showing on television, soundtracks spinning on the record player, toys lying around the house...It wasn't until the theatrical release of *Return of the Jedi* that the saga broke out of this background, and really made an impact on me. But what an impact!

Jedi is one of the first – if not *the* first – movie I clearly remember seeing in the theaters as a young child, and watching it at the drive-in still ranks as one of my all-time favorite movie-going experiences. The movie itself was instantly one of my favorites, and remains so to this day. Vader saving Luke at the end was quite a revelation; it came as an honest surprise to me that the "bad guy" could still be a good dad to Luke and a blue-ghost friend to undeniable good guys like Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi. The rest of the movie – with fighting Ewoks, the frightening Emperor, a Jabba-choking Leia, some action-packed space battles – was thrilling and great fun, and cemented *Star Wars* as my favorite film series.

As an adult, the Special Edition and Prequel Trilogy made me fall in love with the saga all over again, and from some different perspectives. But at the core of my love for *Star Wars* is a four-year-old girl sitting at a drive-in, amazed by a Galaxy Far, Far Away…

FernWithy

Star Wars came out the year I turned seven.

I was living in a small town, and by the time it came to the only movie theater in the county, everyone knew there was something special going on. My mother and I went with another single mother and her son, Jacques. When we got to the theater, the line stretched around the block twice. I'd never seen that many people in Warsaw, New York, at the same time. They let all of us in--the theater was badly oversold. The solution they came up with was that the adults got the seats, and the kids went up to the very front of the theater and sat on the floor. It took up the whole world. It was the biggest, most beautiful thing I'd ever seen. I remember that, riding home, I shoved Jacques aside and told him to "get that big walking carpet out of my way!"

For both *Empire* and *Jedi*, we went into the city for opening weekend, making an event of it. It was *Jedi* that made me a fan for life – the redemption of Anakin Skywalker brought the story home to me. My friends and I started a little SW club and wrote a story about the next generation. We promised to meet up when the rumored prequels arrived, and we kept the promise.

The prequel trilogy revived my love for the saga, particularly for its grand mythic themes, and the undercurrent of compassion and kindness.

lazypadawan

In May 1977, *Star Wars* opened in only one theater in town. Immediately there were huge lines and soon there were reports of people waiting all day to see the movie. My dad came up with the idea of playing hooky from work while my brother and I would be pulled out of school for a "dentist's appointment" on the theory that it would be easier to get into the theater on a weekday.

It worked. Like everyone who first saw the movie back then, I was sold from the moment I saw the Star Destroyer enter the screen. As a fantasy-prone kid who watched horror and sci-fi movies as well as shows like *Star Trek* and *Space 1999*, it was an easy sell. Afterwards, my brother and I couldn't stop talking about it. The first thing we did when we got home was draw all of the characters. *A New Hope* was more than pure entertainment for me; it was an epiphany. From then on, this one film and its progeny would come to be a dominant force in my life for many years afterward.

A New Hope made an impression on the world because it was so unique. It introduced a great fantasy world with great characters that you wanted to visit over and over. It was also the starting point of a long personal journey. I've grown with that universe and its characters and that has led to me to many interesting people and experiences.

Reihla

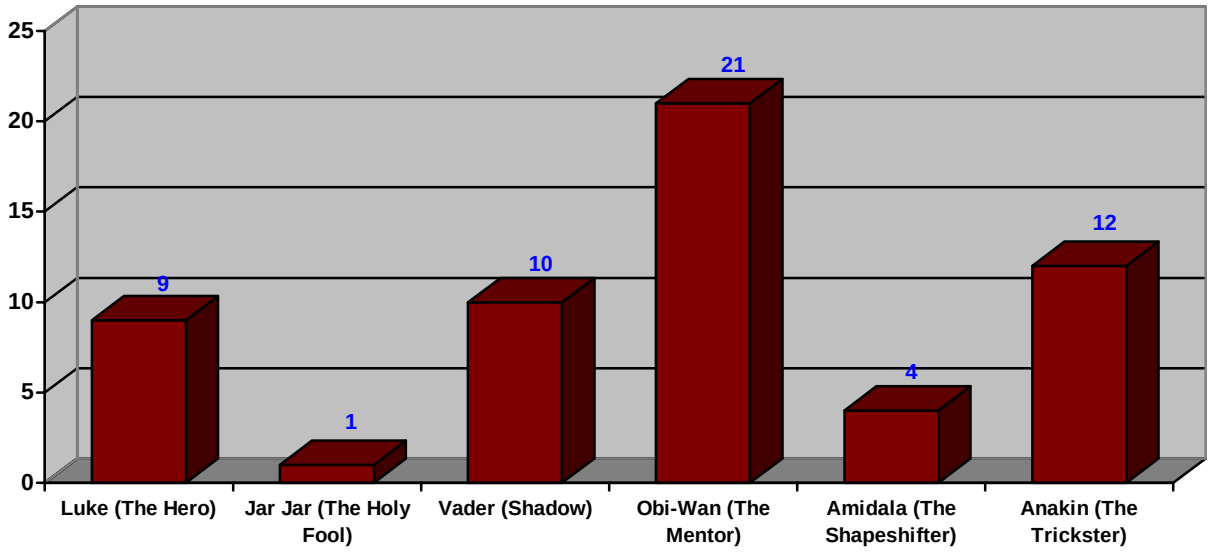
In 1977 I was a nine-year old tomboy. The thing I remember best about my first *Star Wars* experience was the amazing lightsaber. I spent countless hours crafting my own out of clear plastic tubing, a flashlight and lots of duct tape. Of course, I had to make one for a friend so we could duel.

Three years later, when *Empire* was released, I realized there was more to the saga than cool weaponry. My pre-teen imagination was completely captured by that movie – the romance, the action, the revelation that Vader was Luke's father. Fortunately my friends were equally enthralled and we spent weekend after weekend sitting in the new Cinema 6 watching consecutive showings. Just like that we became part of the *Star Wars* fandom. We quoted dialogue line for line. We scribbled characters names and sketches in all of our school notebooks. We bought packs of Topps bubble gum just for the trading cards. We wrote stories about our favorite characters and even made up a few new ones. It was a glorious age to be a *Star Wars* fan.

Then the hype preceding *Revenge of the Jedi* began. Oddly enough, we barely noticed when the title changed to "Return" upon the film's release. This last movie had everything we could've wished for: Luke Skywalker in Jedi black, Han and Leia reunited, Jabba and the Emperor destroyed, and finally, the redemption of Darth Vader. This marvelous conclusion cemented our adoration and we all became fans for life.

Poll Results:

What *Star Wars* Character Represents Your Favorite Archetype?



Issue 1

January 2005

I Don't Want Things to Change: Anakin Skywalker as Trickster

by Lady Aeryn

Any true mythic hero's journey tale is populated with archetypical characters, and the *Star Wars* saga is no exception. Archetypes are constantly recurring types of characters in mythic tales.[1] Sometimes they represent a facet (repressed or otherwise) of the hero's personality, or a quality the hero must come to possess. Sometimes the character stays as one archetype throughout the tale, but more often they represent different archetypes at different phases of their development, which is the case with most of the characters of *Star Wars*, particularly its central figure, Anakin Skywalker. There are seven common classically defined archetypes[2]; at various points throughout his tale Anakin has represented all of them. Perhaps his most crucial archetypical role in the *Star Wars* story, though, is his function as the Trickster.

If one word sums up the role of the Trickster in mythology, it is *change*. The Trickster makes the audience or other characters in the story aware of key flaws in themselves and the world around them; he brings about "healthy change and transformation, often by drawing attention to the imbalance or absurdity of a stagnant situation."[3] Anakin shows this both by direct dialogue exposition ("I don't think the system works") and by the effects of the decaying Galactic Republic and Jedi Order institutions on his character that facilitate his eventual turn to the Dark Side of the Force. His own descent to the Dark Side, itself an illustration of the flaws that lead an individual to darkness, highlights the flaws that will also be the downfall of the Jedi and the Republic. He is instrumental in bringing down both systems, and later on the dictatorial Empire that rises in the Republic's place as well, making room for the rise of a new order of Jedi in the form of his son Luke. He institutes more drastic, large-scale change to the events of the saga than any other character, both irrevocably affecting and being affected by every person and institution he forms a relationship with.

From the very beginning of *Star Wars* continuity it is shown that the Republic in its final years had been steadily degenerating, a process which apparently went long unnoticed: "Like the greatest of trees, able to withstand any external attack, the Republic rotted from within, though the danger was not visible from the outside," says the prologue of the 1976 *A New Hope* novelization.[4] The plot of *The Phantom Menace* significantly focuses on illustrating the symptoms and effects of this degeneration. Before its opening crawl has even finished, *Menace* shows the Republic has gotten to a state where one of its worlds – Naboo – can be invaded and its people imprisoned with hardly a word from its governing body, and even the Republic's Chancellor has become politically powerless to take any action except in secret, dispatching two Jedi to Naboo to investigate the situation.

Before he even becomes a Jedi, Anakin himself witnesses clear examples of how the Republic and Jedi fail the people of the galaxy. He and his mother lived for years in a life of slavery on Tatooine, a system the Republic is aware of yet apparently makes little or no attempt to bring down; many in the Republic seem to not even be aware that slavery still exists in the galaxy. On his first trip to Coruscant Anakin sees an even more direct failure of the Republic, when his friend and crush Padmé Amidala confides to him the severity of Naboo's plight and her fears that the Senate may not intervene, and later the Senate's bureaucratic red tape and the Chancellor's political impotence prove her fears grounded when the Senate refuses to even acknowledge there is a crisis on Naboo.

In one of their scenes together in *Attack of the Clones*, Anakin tells Padmé about his qualms with the Republic and politicians in general, that he doesn't believe the current system works, and shares just exactly what kind of system he thinks *would* work for the Republic. Since in the current situation

Anakin gets stability from empathizing and connecting with other people. But he is forbidden from being in contact with those he has already formed genuine emotional connections with, his mother and Padmé…

politicians and people alike seem incapable of coming to agreements on matters of governance, of what's best for the people being governed; Anakin believes "someone wise" should make them. By itself, this exchange with Padmé almost completely encapsulates the key function of a Trickster: he has pointed out what he sees as a flaw in the Republic, and already has thought of a way to fix it.

Over the course of the prequels the audience is shown the stagnation of the Jedi Order as well. The Jedi, having had little reason to change their ways in a thousand years, have long grown complacent and feel no need to adapt those ways even when faced with the possibility of drastic change from outside. The Jedi Council convenes in the very top of a tall white tower, high above and seemingly disconnected from the problems affecting the world around them. Several members immediately dismiss the idea that the long-believed-extinct Sith have returned, simply because it is hard to believe the Sith could have returned without their knowing. *Clones* continues this display of insular arrogance when Obi-Wan Kenobi surmises the Jedi Temple's archives are incomplete after being unable to locate the planet Kamino in them and is smugly informed by the Jedi's head archivist that an item does not exist if it is not in the archives. This overconfidence in their existing system and unwillingness to adapt it, when applied to their handling of Anakin, are what will ultimately result in their downfall.

For over a thousand generations the Order has applied the same expectations of adherence to the Jedi Code to each student, and for those thousand years it has by and large worked; there doesn't appear to be an epidemic of Jedi leaving the Order to turn rogue or to the Dark Side. (Though it certainly *has* happened prior to Anakin, as the existence of Count Dooku/Darth Tyranus proves.) But Anakin, who unlike his fellow Jedi has spent years growing up in an affectionate family setting, presents a unique status that in the end the existing confines of the Code simply are not equipped to accommodate. Anakin leaves a loving relationship with his mother and is immediately forced into the same severe mold that the rest of the Jedi have had their entire lives to grow into, and because of his potential prophecy-boy status and record-high midi-chlorian count has even higher expectations placed on him, the combined pressures of which over time take a severe toll on Anakin.

Anakin, as one who's always felt passionately and for whom those strong feelings have always been an asset, is suddenly constantly admonished to keep a tighter control on them. The Order, citing the Code tenet forbidding attachment to anyone outside the Order itself, also allows Anakin no contact with his mother, which makes the abrupt transition to a life without emotional attachment even more difficult. Had Anakin been allowed some contact with her, some information on her well-being and whereabouts in their ten years of separation, he would likely *not* have reacted as extremely as he did to her sudden death, prompting his first significant delving into the Dark Side.

Anakin gets stability from empathizing and connecting with other people. But he is forbidden from being in contact with those he has already formed genuine emotional connections with, his mother and Padmé, and by nature there really is no one in the Order he can form an equally strong bond with. He tries with his Jedi master Obi-Wan, but Obi-Wan is so unaccustomed to someone as passionate as Anakin he has no idea how or if he should reciprocate, much to Anakin's frustration. As a result, Anakin seeks understanding elsewhere, unfortunately in the form of Chancellor Palpatine. Palpatine seems to empathize with Anakin's concerns and frustrations about the Jedi, even encouraging him to do what Anakin thinks he should do anyway: "You don't need guidance, Anakin. Soon you will learn to trust your feelings – then, you will be invincible." The circumstances of his growing up a slave and later a

Padawan, always with his life in control of someone else, fuels Anakin's desire to be in a position where he can finally affect change in his own life, a desire Palpatine encourages and exploits to its ultimate potential. So the Order, in their inability or unwillingness to acknowledge the need for certain adaptations in their method of training for Anakin, ends up unwittingly pushing Anakin toward the most dangerous man possible, who will manipulate him into inflicting the greatest destruction possible to the Jedi.

The traditional Trickster generally brings about change by being a comic relief of sorts, and is an agent of mischief, often seeming to bring about that mischief just for the purpose of being mischievous.[5] The increasingly darkening nature of the prequels leaves little room for genuine comic relief in Episodes II and III, though much of what little there is in *Clones* (where Anakin's journey truly begins to flesh out) does come from the banter/bickering between Anakin and Obi-Wan. Anakin certainly is the most deliberately mischievous character in the prequels, finding loopholes in the rules and forever testing the limits of their flexibility, often finding amusement in Obi-Wan's resulting frustration. Anakin even indirectly admits this tendency to Padmé during a dinner where he is using humor and his Force talents to woo her. "If Master Obi-Wan caught me doing this, he'd be *very* grumpy," he quips in an overly-serious tone, floating a piece of fruit to her waiting mouth and flashing a grin.

The clearest example of change coming about directly from Anakin's deliberately mischievous nature is in the melting of the "ice queen" exterior of Padmé, a transformation that will effect her own single greatest contribution to the future of the galaxy, and one of Anakin's as well, in the form of their children. Anakin is seen at his most mischievous, most humorous, when he is courting Padmé. Despite his half-hearted protest to the contrary ("I'd be much too frightened to tease a Senator"), Anakin delights in teasing his love on multiple occasions. His attempts do succeed, as shown at the end of *Clones*: she finally accepts her own love for Anakin, embracing the long-denied woman within her, and becomes his wife.

From the beginning Anakin's unwillingness to conform to expected boundaries is an instrument of change, although that tendency is not always deliberately mischievous; it will in fact grow less deliberately mischievous the more Anakin slips toward his transformation to Darth Vader, though flashes of it will occasionally appear in a much darker form, such as Vader's thinly veiled threats to Lando Calrissian in *The Empire Strikes Back*. (Interestingly, in the new revised version of the end of *Return of the Jedi*, the very first glimpse the audience sees of the restored Anakin is an impish grin straight from his adolescence[6], the death of the Vader persona seeming to restore what was lost.)

One of the most famous embodiments of the Trickster archetype, and most similar in story function to Anakin, is Loki, the Norse god of trickery and deceit[7], conceived by giants and one of the biggest energies of change in Norse mythology. Loki is often painted as a "beautiful but evil god, quick-witted and well-versed in cunning," and whose first impression, as with Anakin as Vader in the original films, appears to be one of unadulterated evil, an impression that upon closer examining reveals a more complex character.[8] *Beautiful but evil* certainly describes certain images of Anakin from Episode III where, despite his physical beauty, he is clearly tainted by a darker power. By Episode III he will also have become the "cunning warrior" we first heard Obi-Wan speak of him as in *A New Hope*.

In the myth, Loki is accepted into the high council of the gods by swearing a blood oath with the all-wise god Odin, after which he begins plotting against the other gods and striking out at them, resulting in his underworld imprisonment.[9] By Episode III, Anakin has become one of the most famous and respected members of the Jedi Order. It's not outside the realm of possibility that this respect may have even landed him a position on the Jedi Council, becoming part of the Order's innermost circle, all the

while keeping counsel with Palpatine, under whose influence he will still ultimately betray them. Anakin duels with Obi-Wan in attempt to kill him, after which Anakin becomes literally imprisoned in his monstrous life-support suit. In the second trilogy he has become the right hand man to Palpatine, perhaps his most trusted counsel – and here again Vader's plotting, this time against Palpatine, secretly planning to overthrow him after realizing the Empire has not become what he had hoped it would be under Palpatine's leaders and that if Palpatine does not die, then Vader's son Luke certainly will.

Loki fights on the side of the giants – his kin – against his fellow gods in the final apocalyptic battle of Norse myth.[10] Again, Anakin does this in both trilogies, turning against his comrades to ally with what he sees as a kindred force. In *Revenge of the Sith*, the final and most brutal act of the prequel trilogy, he will side with the seemingly sympathetic Palpatine against the Jedi, who he feels have betrayed him. In the original trilogy, he continues to fight against the establishment he once served as a leader in the Empire's military confrontations with the Rebel Alliance, whose specific aim is "to restore the Old Republic."[11] In *Return of the Jedi*, he will turn against Palpatine to save his kin.

(It's perhaps also of note in comparing these two Tricksters that Loki was also infamous as a shapeshifter[12], and Anakin's transformation from slave to Jedi to Sith Lord and then eventually back to Anakin again is a shapeshifting if ever there was one. The release of the original trilogy on DVD takes the shapeshifting one step further, having Anakin's final spectral image at the end of *Jedi* as restored to his youthful self[13] instead of the maimed, middle-aged self he died as.)

Anakin is the ultimate Trickster of the saga as a whole, its greatest energy and instrument of change. His role is not without a measure of irony, however, as this is the very same character who protests at the beginning of his journey, upon his decision to leave his mother and become a Jedi, "I don't want things to change." Almost as ironic is his mother's response to that protest, "but you can't stop the change."

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[3] The word "imbalance" in the above definition is also of note in Anakin's Trickster function, as the culmination of his life's journey is, as specifically mentioned in the Chosen One prophecy believed to be about Anakin, restoring balance to the long-imbalanced Force when he destroys the Sith Lord Palpatine in *Return of the Jedi* and saves the life of the last Jedi, Luke. Vogler, pg. 77.

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The Two Sides of "I Killed Them."

by Sarah

The chances are high that no scene in *Attack of the Clones* shocked people more than Anakin's murdering of the Tusken tribe. While very little of it was seen onscreen, it still sparks debate more than two years later. (Then again, it wouldn't be *Star Wars* if it didn't.) Did Anakin, the moment he decided to take revenge for his mother's death, become Darth Vader in everything but appearance and name? Or was he doing the world of Tatooine a favour by getting rid of such savage creatures? The movie gives us no real answers; we have to think about it for ourselves.

"The scene of the Tusken Raiders is the first scene that ultimately takes him on the road to the Dark Side," George Lucas, the creator of *Star Wars*, says about it.[1] Everything about Anakin in this scene and the ones before it are constructed to have Anakin remind us of Darth Vader – even his shadow on the wall when he bids goodbye to Padmé looks like it is wearing Vader's trademark helmet. This is what occurs in "The scene of the Tusken Raiders": After Anakin's mother Shmi dies in his arms, Anakin looks up with fury in his eyes, then we see him coming out of the Tusken tent and start to kill anything in sight. The camera cuts away after just a few deaths are seen onscreen, but we know that it is not likely Anakin will have stopped and walked away after killing just a few. It simply is not in his nature. "Young Skywalker is in pain," Yoda says worriedly, as he picks up on Anakin's feelings through the Force. "Terrible pain..." Not much later, Anakin confesses to Padmé the full extent of his crime. "I killed them," he tells her, "Not just the men, but the women and the children too." Anakin's confession is one of the only times in *Star Wars* where we see a character cry. He hates what he has done, but he cannot let go of his hate towards the Tuskens either. This is understandable, as they murdered his mother for no good reason. Few people could fail to be angry about that. Taking revenge on the children was way over the line, however, and one cannot help but wonder if it foreshadows events to come. No one could possibly say that Anakin's actions were good. But it is possible to argue if they were as bad as they seem. After all, if we cannot muster up even a single shred of sympathy for him, what would be the point of the next episode?

Did Anakin, the moment he decided to take revenge for his mother's death, become Darth Vader in everything but appearance and name?

"They're like animals," Anakin says (well, shouts) about the Tuskens, "and I slaughtered them like animals." So far in the movies, they have been portrayed as little more than savages – they attack Luke in *A New Hope* and they shoot at podracers in *The Phantom Menace*, possibly killing a few of them. Their faces are always hidden. "Many monsters remaining from primeval times still lurk in the outlying regions, and through malice or desperation these set themselves against the human community," says Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.[2] This describes the Sandpeople perfectly – they and the farmers of Tatooine have been in conflict for a long time. There have been deaths on both sides, probably even before Shmi was kidnapped. But after Anakin's killing of the Tusken Raiders, they have become more interesting to the fandom in general, if not more sympathetic. The reason for that is simple: no one likes the idea of children being killed, no matter how vicious the race they belonged to was – even if they were thought of as animals. This is why the whole scene is very effective as Anakin's first step to the Dark Side: it is wrong and possibly quite disturbing, but there are more and more questions and layers to the questions the more one thinks about it. One could say that the men of the tribe were vile creatures and honestly did deserve the label of "animals." One could say the women did nothing to help the prisoner the men were mistreating; it is possible that they did not even care...perhaps killing them was justified, as well. And the children would have grown up to be no better than the adults.

Also, Anakin was barely even sane at the time. He had been temporarily driven mad by grief. They had murdered one of the people he loved the most, after all. It was pure and simple revenge. Surely many of us would do the same thing in the same situation, or something similar. Maybe we would just kill the men and let the rest live. But what consequences would come of that? Do we all have a bit of Anakin Skywalker in us? And does that, by default, mean we have a bit of Darth Vader in us? It is a hard question to ponder, and probably the main reason why the scene inspires as much debate as it does. People would like to think they would do the right thing in a situation as bad as the one Anakin was put in, but what was the right thing? Killing the men of the tribe might have stopped them from kidnapping and torturing more innocent people later on. But is killing anybody ever the correct thing to do? And since Anakin's crime was revenge – when do two wrongs ever make a right? *Star Wars* has plenty of depth in its plot, and this is one of the scenes that proves it without a doubt.

When the topic of whether killing the women and children was right or justified is brought up, it is often pointed out that the women's crime of doing nothing was far less than the crime of the men and not really deserving of death, and the children...well, as has been said, when is killing children ever justified? The mere thought of someone committing an act like that can horrify people like nothing else can. In the very same movie as this act, we see Yoda teaching a class of Jedi younglings. When Anakin talks about the killings that may well have been the first thing the audience's mind jumped to – innocent creatures. No matter how much viewers may feel sorry for Anakin after seeing what has been taken from him, that is the one thing we cannot possibly condone. Looking at it as a question of right and wrong or of simple human behaviour, it seems that killing the men was justified (especially considering that they killed the farmers who went out to look for Shmi), that killing the women was possibly justified but we do not know enough about the whole thing to really be able to say (did they even know there was a prisoner? The movie doesn't show us), but that killing the children was a terrible thing for Anakin to have done.

A story in mythology similar to this one is the story of Kut-o-yis, or Blood Clot Boy. "He exterminated a tribe of cruel bears, with the exception of one female who was about to become a mother. She pleaded so pitifully for her life, that he spared her. If he had not done this, there would be no bears in the world."[3] The same thing happened when he killed a tribe of snakes. The audience does not know if, during Anakin's extermination of a cruel tribe, anyone pleaded for her life, but it seems unlikely that if anyone did he would have spared her. After all, Anakin did not just kill them because they were cruel – he killed them because they took someone away from him. In some stories, slaying the creatures tormenting the townspeople is always a good and noble deed, but in this story it is more complicated, because it was for revenge. It is also complicated because we know what will become of Anakin...he will one day be as bad as them. This often happens in stories – the person seeking revenge goes much too far and becomes evil themselves, such as in the play *Medea*, where a woman seeks revenge on her husband. "You can see the evils of revenge because Medea was right in condemning Jason, but because of how she dealt with this injustice, she is forever seen as evil and unjust herself. She could have come out of that mess looking like a saint, but she chose a bad path. She had the power for revenge and she used it and now she has to suffer the consequences," explains Frederick John Kluth.[4] Anakin too will later be seen as evil and unjust, although this will be for the crimes he commits as Darth Vader. If, however, in Episode III the Council discovers what Anakin did on Tatooine, this may well have dire consequences.

No matter if everyone on the planet considered the Tuskens animals, there had to be some good in some of them...how can they be animals if they are humanoid and considered to be "men, women and children"? Furthermore, they are capable of making tents and setting up camps, and keeping weapons. No one knows why they thought it was all right to kidnap and kill an innocent woman, but then again no

one knows if other Tuskens from different camps or different parts of the planet would or would not have done the same thing. Anakin does not seem to think they really are animals either, otherwise, surely he would not be so conflicted about it. “I’m a Jedi,” he tells Padmé tearfully. “I know I’m better than this.” Not the words of someone heartless, but certainly the words of someone who will be heartless later, as anyone even remotely acquainted with *Star Wars* knows. At the moment, though, he is nothing but a young man who has both had a terrible crime committed against him and committed one himself. He understands this, but he is still conflicted about it, as many people would be. Being a Jedi doesn’t cancel all his human emotions. And, being Anakin, he is not brilliant at controlling them. Joseph Campbell once told a story: A samurai had the duty to avenge the murder of his overlord, but the murderer, on seeing him, spat in his face. The samurai then sheathed his sword and walked away, because he had been made angry, and if he had killed that man in anger it would have been a personal act, instead of an impersonal act of vengence.[5] This is exactly the opposite of what Anakin does. The story of the samurai (who the Jedi are at least partly based on) would be what a Jedi would be expected to do: walk away and not give in. But Anakin did not. The Jedi Council would not be happy, if they did find out.

Anakin’s conflict and anger are the keys to this scene. He knows what he did was very wrong, he is able to get through his hate and realise that, but the real problem is that he will not learn from it at all. He will not become a better person because of his temporary descent into darkness...instead he will become a far worse one. He will kill in cold blood, like the Tusken Raider men did; and he will wear a mask like they do, as well. Generally, it is agreed that these killings were Anakin’s first real experience of the Dark Side of the Force, but even so, at the moment he can still tell right from wrong. He can still know how close he came to complete darkness, how close he came to having rage and loss blind him completely. After the fall, he will not even have that.

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Midi-Chlorians and Mitochondria, a Comparison

The possible source of inspiration for George Lucas's Force allies

by Sgmsky

Anakin: "Master, Sir...I heard Yoda talking about midi-chlorians. I've been wondering: What are midi-chlorians?"
Qui-Gon Jinn: "Midi-chlorians are a microscopic life form that resides within all living cells".
Anakin: "They live inside me?"
Qui-Gon Jinn: "Inside your cells, yes. And we are symbionts with them."
Anakin: "Symbionts?"
Qui-Gon Jinn: "Life forms living together for mutual advantage. Without midi-chlorians, life could not exist and we would have no knowledge of the Force. They continually speak to us, telling us the will of the Force. When you learn to quiet your mind, you'll hear them speaking to you." [1]

In the first Episode of George Lucas's *Star Wars* saga we see Master Qui-Gon Jinn lecturing the young Anakin Skywalker about a microscopic life form that resides within the cells of all living beings. Fans of George Lucas's amazing tales through the last several decades have frequently discovered that the described distant galaxy is, much of the time, very similar to our own planet Earth. The organisms called midi-chlorians described above are no exception. The next paragraphs were written with the intent to show this fact, based on scientific biological evidence and comparisons with real cell organelles that all of us carry in each of our cells.

To gain a better understanding of the analogy that is the subject of this paper, there is a need to explain basic facts of biology, particularly related to cell biology.

All living beings have a base element in the tissues that constitute the organism – the cell. From a structural point of view, there are two types of cells: the eucaryotic (present in animals and plants) and the procaryotic (which can be found in more simple life forms, like bacteria). Residing in the eucaryotic cell's cytoplasm are the cell organelles called mitochondria (in animals) and chloroplast (in plants).

These little microscopic organisms actually live in a symbiotic relationship with our cells, resembling the relationship related by Master Qui-Gon Jinn. Without them, life as we know it could not exist. From here, a very reasonable question may be asked: How can we talk about a symbiotic relationship when, apparently, we basically have cell structures "doing their job"? Well, according to several authors, there is considerable evidence that bacteria may have played an unexpected role in the evolution of eucaryotic cells. It is thought that at some stage in evolution, bacteria invaded a primitive eucaryotic cell. Instead of causing harm, the bacteria provided respiratory (in animals) and photosynthetic (in plants) abilities previously lacking in the cell. Both benefited from this association and each gradually became dependent on the other. The bacteria eventually changed to become mitochondria and chloroplast, which are responsible for respiration and photosynthesis, respectively. The idea of a procaryotic origin for eucaryotic organelles is know as the Endosymbiotic Theory.[2] According to this statement, we have microscopic life forms that, for no explainable reason, invaded cells and adapted themselves to this new environment with such success that, nowadays they are actually living as one single individual together with the cell. In George Lucas's galaxy, the reason for the symbiotic relationship that living organisms have with midi-chlorians is not explained either. Probably because this event took place long before anyone could have recorded it; it is likely as ancient as life itself. Therefore, it can be logical to assume that it happened in a similar way as on Earth. Call it Nature or the Will of the Force.

Another piece of biological evidence that supports the Endosymbiotic theory is the organelle's structure itself, which by analogy can be applied to the midi-chlorians. Although mitochondria are organelles of eucaryotic cells, they resemble procaryotic cells in several ways. For instance, they contain their own ribossomes, which are procaryotic type. They also contain their own DNA, which, like procaryotic DNA, is a single circular double-stranded molecule. Mitochondria divide to form new mitochondria in much the same way that a procaryotic cell divides, and they divide independently of the cell nucleus (however, they are unable to divide if they are removed from the cytoplasm).[2] By this behavior we realize that even within the cell, these organelles behave themselves as different individuals but, on the other hand, they can not survive independently.

[A] direct relationship is shown in the movies between the midi-chlorian count in someone's cells and that person's predisposition to acquire Jedi abilities.

Nevertheless, a direct relationship is shown in the movies between the midi-chlorian count in someone's cells and that person's predisposition to acquire Jedi abilities. To support this we can see Obi-Wan Kenobi's astonished reaction when he realizes that Anakin's count is at a higher level than Yoda's in *Star Wars*'s first episode, *The Phantom Menace*.

Activities in a cell require energy, whether for macromolecular synthesis or for transport of substances through or out of the cytoplasm. Mitochondria are cytoplasmatic organelles where energy-rich molecules of adenosine tri-phosphate (ATP) are generated during a biochemical process called Aerobic Respiration. Because of this function, the mitochondria are called "power houses" of eucaryotic cells.[2] So, the mitochondria provide animals the energy required for all cell activities. These activities also include the basic ones, like breathing, the heart beat, muscular contractions, etc. To sum up, life would never be possible the way we know it, if it not for the cell organelle's functions, simply because our organisms would not be able to acquire the necessary energy to perform basic and vital functions. The fuel molecules (such as glucose) that result from partial degradation of food enter mitochondria, whose primary function is to convert the potential chemical energy of fuel molecules into a form that the cell can use: the energy rich molecule called ATP. Mitochondria are the cell's power plants.[3]

In *Star Wars*, the Force is referred to multiple times as a source of energy that surrounds us everywhere. According to Master Qui-Gon, when at peace a Jedi can hear the midi-chlorians. Assuming the midi-chlorians have similar functions in the *Star Wars* galaxy to the mitochondria functions in planet Earth, a Jedi can become one with the Force and communicate with these cells' energy providers. Analyzing this fact, it no longer becomes surprising where the Jedi extract the energy to, for an example, challenge gravity when it is required. On this basis, the use of the Force for this physical purpose could be explained from a biological point of view, resulting from the midi-chlorians direct action, under the influence of this sort of communication with their symbiotic partner. This brings an all-new meaning to the sentence, "Use the Force."

Apart from all that has been said, one gap can be found in George Lucas's story. In the movies we are lead to believe that the Force is an inherited character trait. Luke Skywalker, when revealing the truth to his sister Leia, says: "The Force is strong in my family. My father has it, I have it..." making the viewers understand that it passes from father to child.[4] In the prequels, this idea is strengthened on Tatooine when, realizing Anakin's predisposition to the Force, Master Qui-Gon asks his mother Shmi about Anakin's father's origins, trying to find a reasonable explanation for the boy's relationship to the Force.

When it comes to the cell organelles, due to the fact that the eggs of most species contain large amounts of cytoplasm, and sperm contain almost no cytoplasm, the mitochondria in a zygote come from the

cytoplasm of the female parent's egg, even though half the zygote is nuclear chromosomes come from the male parent.[3] This is commonly known as Maternal Inheritance. Because most of the mitochondria in the zygote come from the egg, most of the mitochondria in the developing animal will be derived from its mother.[3] So, here we have a disagreement regarding the biological similarity between midi-chlorians in the *Star Wars* galaxy and our own cell organelles. If an analogy were to be made relating to this fact, it would be more reasonable that the Force's inheritance would mostly occur from the mother to her offspring rather than from the father.

Nevertheless, it is also said that chloroplast and mitochondria are complex organelles and only a minority of their functions is maternally inherited.[3] From this statement, it is understood that the organelles' functions do not depend grandiosely on progenitors but rather on the individual they are one with, and more particularly on its needs. Making the comparison with *Star Wars*, the midi-chlorians' functions, resulting in the expressing of the Force in an individual, may result from a small dose of parental legacy combined with a major portion of the individual character they are symbiotic with. Adding that with the Force's ability to chose the ones most suitable to perform the task and we have the Jedi.

To sum up, it is obvious that George Lucas has taken a perfect terrestrial biological fact and transported it to his (not so) make-believe galaxy. Even the word midi-chlorian has the prefix chlor- as in chloroplast. He added a little bit of mythology, directly connecting the midi-chlorians as physical agents of the Force, and came up with the source for a basic explanation to the physical stunts performed by the Jedi, which have been, so far, impossible to explain, from a scientific point of view. Until now.

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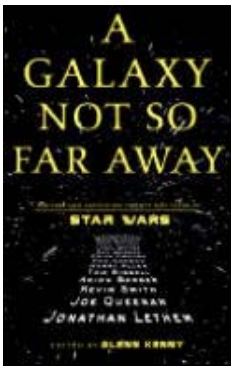
Recommendation

Star Wars and Popular Culture



Title: A Galaxy Not So Far Away: Writers and Artists on Twenty-five Years of *Star Wars*
Editor: Glenn Kenny
ISBN: 0-8050-7074-5
Publisher: Henry Holt & Company, LLC (or Owl Books?)
Copyright: 2002

Reviewed by Reihla.

Browsing the rather sparse collection of *Star Wars*-related literature at my local bookstore I happened across *A Galaxy Not So Far Away*, a series of essays put together by *Premier* magazine editor Glenn Kenny. I scanned the book and stumbled onto "Becoming Darth Vader" by Lydia Millet. Clearly Ms. Millet shared my belief that *Star Wars* saved Hollywood from immersing itself in stark realism and brought fun back to the theaters. She even acknowledged that it heralded the return of hope to a then-hopeless American culture. When she went on to label Darth Vader a poised, elegant aristocrat who served as a metaphor for the loss of humanity I was hooked. I had to see what the other 15 novelists, journalists, filmmakers, and critics had to say.

Of the reminiscences chronicled in this book, some are positive, some are openly negative. Others, the majority, fall into a range between the two extremes. A few bear a striking resemblance to a meeting of "*Star Wars* Fans Anonymous" complete with rambling personal explorations of the author's first encounter with *Star Wars*. As an avid fan I heartily enjoyed the more positive essays, but I have to admit that I also found the negative essays surprisingly thought-provoking. As with any anthology, I considered a few works to be gems and an equal number to possess few, if any, redeeming qualities. It is worth noting that often the language and themes are mature and definitely not geared towards the younger audience.

Aside from Ms. Millet's essay other excellent selections are: Jonathan Lethem's poignant description of seeing *Star Wars* twenty-one times the summer his mother was dying of cancer, Todd Hanson's startlingly funny and unexpected defense of *The Phantom Menace*, and Erika Krouse's discussion of the Jedi code in relation to her own exploration of martial arts. More often than not, the writers deliver fond personal recollections and comparisons that most *Star Wars* fans can identify with. On a more general note, they all give a clearer understanding of the way *Star Wars* has affected our culture. The best work by far in this regard was self-proclaimed "media assassin" Harry Allen's inference that hip-hop in its present form might not exist if it weren't for *Star Wars*.

I won't call this "a book no *Star Wars* fan should miss" because, frankly, it isn't for everyone. All of these writers are pop culture enthusiasts and many are professional critics. They don't always take the safe and easy road to say what they want to say and aren't afraid to offend in order to get their point across. Still, if you happen to be fond of exploring the way *Star Wars* films have altered our society's views on entertainment, art and culture, I'd say this book is for you.

Discovering *Star Wars*

Keith Palmer

If it wasn't earlier, it was at least in 1981, when I was five, that I was taken to *Star Wars* at the movies. Like the date, most of my first reactions to what I saw are now hazy. It's obvious I liked it from the start, though.

The movies were very well established by then. I played with action figures and was jealous of my friends' vehicles, intermittently bought the comics for substitute doses of adventure, and read the storybooks to remind myself what had happened. In the midst of this, I never thought to ask to go see *Return of the Jedi*, but that seemed fine at the time. I eventually saw it on videotape, and that seemed just as good.

For all the other things I became interested in, I never lost my attachment to *Star Wars*. Eventually, though, I was challenged about why I still liked it. It took time to figure out, but finding the well-expressed thoughts of others finally helped me. It just meant a last, conscious step away from the simple war of good guys versus bad guys, back to realising redemption was an equally valid tale. Now, there was a fall to give a beginning, and my interest in the new and old movies alike could finally become two halves of a whole. I don't have to chase the unattainable feelings of uncomplicated youth. My understanding is now much deeper than that.

Lady Aeryn

I don't remember a time when I haven't known and loved *Star Wars*. I was raised on sci-fi by my dad, a longtime *Star Trek* fan; he was probably who first introduced me to the movies.
My first clear *Star Wars* memory is when the USA cable network, more than ten years ago, ran the entire original trilogy back to back twice in one day – I watched every bit of both broadcasts, fully entranced. I remember watching the *A New Hope* trench runs literally on the edge of my seat, not believing Dad when he told me the pit in the sand in *Return of the Jedi* was a living creature, and getting my first ever spoiler when he said that Luke and Leia were brother and sister.

One day in 1997, Dad came home with a now-familiar black and gold box: the entire original SE trilogy on video. Now that I had access to them every day, a seed that had been largely asleep for most of my childhood awakened with a vengeance. Craving more than the OT could give me, I had a several-year fling with the Expanded Universe, which led me to online fandom. But in time with repeat viewings of *Jedi* and the release of the prequels, I drew away from the EU and fell in love with the journey of Anakin Skywalker – and realized *this* was why I loved *Star Wars*.

Sarah

As every *Star Wars* fan knows, *The Phantom Menace* came out in the year 1999. In the summer of that year, when I was 11 years old, I got introduced to *Star Wars*. Of course, there wasn't really any way I couldn't have got introduced to it...it was everywhere. You couldn't walk into a shop without seeing shelves full of figures in red-and-black packaging, couldn't open a cereal or crisp packet without

something *Star Wars*-related falling out. The movie itself was great fun...I remember that I needed to go to the toilet at some point, but as it was the part where Obi-Wan was hanging over the pit, I couldn't possibly.

Come 2002, I hadn't forgotten about *Star Wars*, but I had discovered the Internet...and its various fanbases. So after seeing *Attack of the Clones* with a friend, I went searching for the *Star Wars* fandom. I found it. I instantly ordered the OT from a video store (they delivered them quickly, for which I am grateful) and I sat down and watched them. To this day, the ROTJ SE ending is my Favourite Ending to Anything of All Time.

So, here I am two years later, eagerly awaiting Episode III and the end of this fine saga. Well, not quite eagerly awaiting...I'm going to be sorry to see it go, after all. But I love the Prequel Trilogy with a passion, and I want to see the fates of its characters played out on screen. As do we all.

Sean Dineen

In 1977, I was a four-year-old disabled kid. *Star Wars* gave me hope and pride. I spent hours pretending my grandfather's garden stakes were lightsabers, and looking for new figures. Three years later, Yoda became my teaching model, and in 1983, the saga's happy ending gave me strength to overcome using a wheelchair.

After so many years, the saga returned, just as my teaching was beginning. In a world of mindless fluff, it reminds many about universal issues and the power of forgiveness. Sir Alec Guinness retained his love for that even as he grew somewhat disappointed with Obi-Wan over-shadowing his other great roles.

As the saga comes to an end next May, we shall find the force within ourselves to overcome fear and step into the night of a better nature.

Sgmsky

When I was a child (between eight- and ten-years-old), I used to spend a lot of time home alone because my parents worked all day. In the evening it was just me and the television. One day I found two videotapes that my brother had borrowed from a friend: *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. Not really knowing what it was at the time, I inserted the tape and watched. For four hours I only stopped staring at the TV to replace the tape. I was absorbed, amazed, hypnotized. When my brother came back home I persuaded him to help me finish the trilogy and the very next day we were at the video store renting *Return of the Jedi*.

That was it. I was officially a fan, even though I didn't even know what being a fan was. Everything I did had a little bit of *Star Wars* in it. When outside, I would pick up a stick and make it my lightsaber; I used to picture myself as a rebel fighting the Empire or as a Vader ally trying to protect the rebels from inside the Empire. A child's mind is wonderful.

I grew up but the *Star Wars* bug remained. I no longer travel with my imagination to the *Star Wars* galaxy. Instead, I have the Internet where I can share this passion with other people. It sure feels good. Thank you George Lucas!!

Issue 2

February 2005

Triumph Over Technology

by ami-padme

[Campbell] talked about how Lucas "has put the newest and most powerful spin" to the classic story of the hero…"the message that technology is not going to save us...We have to rely on our intuition, our true being."[1]

*[*Star Wars*]...asks, "Is the machine going to crush humanity or serve humanity? Humanity comes not from the machine but from the heart."*[2]

George Lucas once said, "*Star Wars* is made up of many themes…One is our relationship to machines, which are fearful, but also benign."[3] Indeed, the subject of humanity's eventual triumph over technology – and over the uniformity, oppression, and evil that the technology-bound Galactic Empire symbolizes – is one of the core messages of the saga. Literature is replete with warnings about the dangers of becoming over-reliant on the technology we have created; it is equally full of praise for the uniqueness of the human spirit, which can be lost as we become more strongly correlated with soulless machines. The *Star Wars* saga reflects this dichotomy between man and machine through the story's main protagonist, Anakin Skywalker, who provides a more personal window to the major conflict between the Republic-Empire-Rebellion and the Jedi-Sith. Anakin's own humanity, goodness, and connection to the Force are shown to be in tension with his link to and reliance on technology throughout his life. His struggle is that of the forces of good in the galaxy, and through six episodes the audience sees the fall and eventual triumph of good over evil, and humanity over technology.

The Phantom Menace begins the saga and introduces us to Anakin, showing his connection to the Force, and to technology. It also reveals a galaxy in turmoil, displayed through the rise of machines used for evil purposes.

Anakin is shown to be the Chosen One of prophecy – a young boy who is essentially the human embodiment of the spiritual energy of the *Star Wars* galaxy, the Force. Before he is even seen onscreen, Anakin's presence is felt by Jedi Masters Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi; upon meeting Anakin, Qui-Gon is quickly taken with his Force strength and potential. His midi-chlorian count is perhaps the highest ever recorded. When he is later brought before the Jedi Council, he is able to perform the Jedi's tests on command.

Anakin is also introduced through a relationship with various kinds of technology. The audience first sees him in Watto's shop, surrounded by machinery, explaining rather bitterly to Padmé that he "wouldn't have lasted so long if I wasn't so good at fixing things." He offers those skills to Qui-Gon's group to help repair their ship, claming, "I can fix anything!" He is equally good at building things, as he has secretly created a protocol droid and podracer. Later on in the film, Anakin's flying skills are highlighted during both the podrace and the Battle of Naboo. His exceptional abilities seem to blend innate skills, advanced technical knowledge, and the advantages of being Force sensitive. Thus, the audience sees the important, competing aspects of Anakin's character.

With regard to the galaxy at large, Episode I chronicles the beginning of the end of both the Republic and the Jedi by focusing on the blockade, invasion, and eventual freeing of the planet Naboo. The Sith, who represent evil in this story, are shown to be in control of large, automated droid forces bent on controlling and subjugating the peoples of Naboo – creating enough chaos in the Republic to allow the Sith to begin to gain control. Many visuals of *The Phantom Menace* play on the theme of technology

rising against the human spirit: a fleet of ships blockade the planet, a seemingly endless row of droids march on its plains and cities. Though Naboo is freed from the Trade Federation's grasp by the end of the movie, the Republic and the Jedi have unwittingly begun to lose the larger war. Anakin, the Republic, and the Jedi are all set up for a conflict between humanity and machines, between good and evil, through this introductory chapter.

In *Attack of the Clones*, Anakin moves closer to his ultimate fall – as do the Republic and Jedi. The relationship between Anakin and technology becomes more central, and more complex. The audience sees a great deal of Anakin's humanity and his connection to the Force, as he struggles to find his place as a man and Jedi. He falls in love with Padmé and chafes against the parental guidance of his mentor, Obi-Wan, as many young men his age are wont to do. He speaks about feeling strong in the Force, about coming along in his training, and about his desire to no longer be held back. He makes it clear that he wants to become "the most powerful Jedi ever." A nearly-fully trained adult, Anakin uses the Force in impressive ways to fight and fly, eventually losing control with both the Tuskens and in his initial attack on Count Dooku.

Anakin's connection to technology is also stronger in this second film. He is recognized by his former slave owner, Watto, after ten years away, for fixing a droid. After his first slide to the Dark Side – the Tusken slaughter – Padmé finds Anakin in the Lars' garage echoing sentiments from Episode I, about how good he is at fixing things, and how much easier life seems when he's able to do so. Most importantly, when Count Dooku severs his right arm during a lightsaber duel, Anakin literally loses his first piece of his humanity and replaces it with a machine.

As the galaxy moves toward war, we once again have the "bad guys" – the Separatists, who are ultimately controlled by the Sith – leading a mechanical army of droids against the Republic. Ostensibly, the army of the "good guys" is not filled with machines; the clones are living, human beings. However, technology is used extensively to artificially create, grow, and replenish this army. The Republic's forces are corrupted as they were procured under false pretenses by the Sith – this corruption is symbolized by the use of technology to create artificial life for the army of the "good guys." For Anakin and the galaxy, the decline and fall is beginning to take shape, and technology is figuratively beginning to take over.

The last piece of the prequel trilogy has yet to be seen – and there will undoubtedly be surprises in store – but there are several easy avenues of speculation with regard to *Revenge of the Sith* that fit the theme of humanity's struggle with the technology it has created. Anakin will of course fall to the Dark Side and become Darth Vader, a shell of a man trapped inside monstrous machinery. The details of why Anakin fell are still open to debate, but there is a line of thought that argues that Anakin wants power – power to do a variety of things from protecting and controlling the people he loves, to ending the war that is engulfing the galaxy. In *The Power of Myth*, Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell discuss how technology can fit in with these desires: "Machines help us to fulfill the idea that we want the world to be made in our image, and we want it to be what we think it ought to be…But then there comes a time when the machine begins to dictate to you."[4] Anakin loses his morality and loses his humanity in both body and soul, and therefore becomes, for all intents and purposes, a complete machine, reliant on bionic lungs and limbs in order to live.

The Republic and the Jedi face similar destruction at the hands of the Empire. In the original trilogy, the Empire is marked by massive and deadly technology. Weapons such as the Death Star ensure that oppression is the new order of the day, and the individuality of the human spirit is ruthlessly stamped

out by Palpatine and his new armed forces. Both Anakin and the galaxy have failed Campbell's test – the machines have crushed humanity.

With the original trilogy, the story enters a pattern reverse that of prequels. Technology has won, and the human spirit has been defeated – the audience finds that humanity is not entirely lost. The saga reaches its conclusion after a trend of the human spirit reasserting itself in the face of the soulless Empire.

Darth Vader, from the first time we see him in *A New Hope*, is defined by his machinery; his trademark mask and his breathing introduce him to the audience. He is almost always seen surrounded by technology – a Super Star Destroyer, the Death Star, a TIE Fighter. However, the Force is still a strong part of Darth Vader's character. As George Lucas once explained, "He has mechanical legs. He has mechanical arms. He's hooked up to a breathing machine…but I wanted him to be human enough that we could identify with him."[5] Ironically, Vader himself provides reminders of his own humanity as he pointedly reminds the Imperial rank that he is unimpressed with the Death Star's power; he remains an adherent of the Force. He is referred to more than once as the last remnant of the Jedi "religion." Through the Force, he senses both Obi-Wan's and Luke's presence. He is still a skilled flier and fighter, as evidence by the battle at the end of the film. While these hints may not seem like much in the face of what Anakin has become, they form a glimmer of hope to carry the audience through the rest of the trilogy.

When looking beyond Darth Vader, there is the Empire, fully in control – but with the first Rebel victory appearing as a chink in the armor after the destruction of the Death Star. The Jedi are assumed to be extinct, but Obi-Wan Kenobi has survived and set Anakin's son on the path to becoming a Jedi. Luke, in his first real test, chooses not to rely on the computers of his X-Wing. Instead, he trusts in Obi-Wan, the Force, and himself. Despite everything, it is clear in Episode IV that all is not lost.

The ascendancy of the forces of good and humanity continues in *The Empire Strikes Back*, despite continued dark times overall. Darth Vader is at his worst behavior of the entire trilogy, killing his subordinates, torturing Han Solo and Chewbacca, carbon-freezing Han, and so on. Yet the main drive of his irrational rage is his obsessive pursuit of his son, Luke. This obsession echoes his very human need for family that the audience saw in the prequels. Vader is also revealed under his mask for the first time; the pod he needs in order to survive is shown, and he is briefly seen from the back without his mask. The tension between the dual sides of his character has reached a crescendo. The philosopher Descartes once pondered this duality, and decided that "[t]he body is purely mechanical, a machine…An animal possessed a body but nothing more…True, man had a body, but he also had a mind that housed the soul."[6] The fact that the audience still has evidence of Vader's soul in Episode V will be critical to the saga's final chapter.

The question of Luke's ultimate fate, of whether or not he will follow in his father's footsteps, is raised by [his] technological hand.

On a broader scale, *Empire* features an ongoing plot thread related to the workings of technology – Han, Leia, Chewbacca, and C-3PO (and eventually Lando and R2-D2) are continually trying to evade Darth Vader and can barely stay ahead of him because of the constant failures of the *Falcon*'s hyperdrive. Also importantly, Luke loses his hand in this movie and it is replaced with a mechanical one. The question of Luke's ultimate fate, of whether or not he will follow in his father's footsteps, is raised by this technological hand.

Return of the Jedi ends the saga with the final redemption of Anakin Skywalker, the defeat of the Empire, and the rise of a new Jedi Order. Vader is initially shown in

connection with the Death Star and in subservience to Emperor Palpatine. However, Vader still senses Luke through the Force (even when the Emperor cannot), and is clearly giving Luke signs of his innate goodness, whether intentionally or not. The original piece of Vader's mechanical body, his right arm, becomes an instrument for good, as does Luke's mechanical arm. Both serve as powerful warnings to Luke of the dangers of the Dark Side to which he has tread so perilously close, and he makes a conscious choice not to sacrifice his own humanity even if it means his death.

The part of Darth Vader that is still Anakin Skywalker recognizes the choice his son has made. As his final redemptive, soul-restoring act, he saves the galaxy and his son by killing the Emperor in a manner he knew would destroy the technology that keeps him alive. Just before Anakin dies, his face is revealed and the mask of Vader is removed for the last time. Joseph Campbell says, "when Luke Skywalker unmasks his father, he is taking off the machine role that the father has played."[7] When Luke burns Vader's suit in a traditional Jedi funeral, it seems to symbolize the end of the technological being Anakin Skywalker became. Finally, Anakin's spirit is seen at the end of the movie, with the spirits of Obi-Wan and Yoda, and the audience sees that his journey back to the light, back to humanity, is complete.

For the rest, Han is freed from his carbonite prison and learns to let go of the *Falcon*, his own tie to technology, in pursuit of the greater good. The Rebellion takes on the Empirical fleet and destroys the second Death Star, spelling the end of the Empire. On the ground, the Empire's forces are defeated by the Rebels working in concert with the primitive Ewoks of the Endor moon. The Emperor, Empire and Dark Side are all defeated, and both literally and symbolically the technology that gave them power goes with them.

The *Star Wars* saga, both through the character of Anakin Skywalker and through the general plot, tells an old story about man's relationship with his machines. The triumph of the human spirit is an inspirational tale for all audiences and generations.

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Angels and Demons: Love and the Hero in *Star Wars* Episodes I & II and *Spider-Man* & *Spider-Man 2*

by Scott J. Epstein

Angels and demons dancing in my head
Lunatics and monsters underneath my bed
Media messiahs playing on my fears
Pop culture prophets playing in my ears
– Neil Peart, "Totem"

George Lucas and Sam Raimi express starkly contrasting views of romantic love in regard to their central heroes in their respective recent films, Lucas' *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace* and *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones*, and Raimi's *Spider-Man* and *Spider-Man 2*. For Lucas, romantic (and even filial) love represents a dangerous temptation to "attachment" and "possession" and a desire to use power to control the world. For Raimi, on the other hand, romantic and filial love are as essential to the hero as oxygen – and without which the hero cannot be a hero.

Both heroes, Lucas' Anakin Skywalker and Raimi's Peter Parker/Spider-Man, share a number of similarities. They're both raised by strong women/mother figures (Shmi for Anakin, Aunt May for Peter Parker), both have strong father-like relationships with a mentor figure (Uncle Ben for Peter Parker, and Obi-Wan – ironically also later known as "Ben" – for Anakin), and both have life-long and similar crushes on their love interests, Padmé Naberrie and Mary Jane Watson.

Their crushes begin as children at first meeting. When Anakin meets Padmé, his first words to her are, "Are you an angel?" Similarly a six-year-old Peter, upon first seeing his love interest, Mary Jane Watson, move in next door, Peter asks his Aunt May, about Mary Jane, "[I]s that an angel?"

Interestingly enough, both of these first meetings also link the romantic object to the mother figure. But Peter is able to bring his relationship with Aunt May to an adult level before consummating his relationship with Mary Jane, while Anakin is never able to fully bring his relationship with his mother to an appropriate level before she dies.

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell described the necessity of the rite of passage into adulthood:

> The so-called rites of passage…are distinguished by the formal, and usually very severe, exercises of severance, where by the mind is radically cut away from the attitudes, attachments, and life patterns of the stage being left behind. Then follows an interval of more or less extended retirement, during which are enacted rituals designed to introduce the life adventurer to the forms and proper feelings of his new estate, so that when, at last, the time has ripened for the return to the normal world, the initiate will be as good as reborn. (Campbell, 1968, 10)

Although neither formal nor ritual, Peter's revelation to Aunt May about his role in Uncle Ben's death (omitting his identity as Spider-Man), enacts this separation. After which, Peter retires to isolation, and finally, eventually reconciles with his Aunt, but in a different relationship than what had gone before. And this change allows Peter to embark on an adult, non-Oedipal romantic relationship with Mary Jane.

For both boys, their love object remains out of reach for most of their childhood and adolescence. For Anakin, the restrictions of the Jedi Order prevent him even from speaking to Padmé. Social status – his as a "geek" or "nerd" and Mary Jane's as the popular girl – prevents Peter from even speaking to Mary Jane (even though she lives next door), let alone having an opportunity to date her. For both men, this changes as they come into their own with their powers, and make the transition from boy to man. Anakin re-connects with Padmé when he and Obi-Wan are assigned to protect her from assassins – and this is the first time we see Anakin as a Jedi. Peter connects with Mary Jane at the first use of his powers – his use of his spider-sense to know that she's about to slip and fall, and his use of speed and coordination to save her.

Both men believe that a romantic attachment is by definition incompatible with their chosen lives – Jedi for Anakin, superhero for Peter. Anakin describes the restrictions placed on him as a Jedi: "Attachment is forbidden. Possession is forbidden." Obi-Wan elaborates, when Anakin confides his attraction to Padmé: "You've made a commitment to the Jedi Order – a commitment not easily broken." That romance is incompatible with a Jedi's life – and in fact dangerous to Jedi is a central axiom of Episode II – and confirmed not only by events in the movie as they unfold (and presumably unfold in Episode III), but also by Lucas' statements in the comment track of the DVD. Lucas conflates the fear aspect of infatuation (as opposed to the security and comfort of love) with the kinds of fear that can lead to abuse of power. That fear is an integral part of infatuation has been empirically observed:

> [U]nderlying all of this angst and ecstasy was unmitigated fear…Most of Tennov's informants reported trembling, pallor, flushing, a general weakness, and overwhelming sensations of awkwardness…Shyness, fear of rejection, anticipation, an longing for reciprocity were the central sensations of infatuation (Fisher, 1992, 39-40)

Lucas notes that "possession" leads to jealousy, and leads to fear of loss, which leads to the attempt to use power to control the universe – for Lucas, the Dark Side.

For Peter Parker – his opening narration in *Spider-Man 2* expresses his belief that his similar powers place similar restrictions on him: "I made a choice once to live a life of responsibility. A life [Mary Jane] can never be a part of." That his chosen "profession" is the reason he believes he can't be with Mary Jane, too, rings more true than the other explanation he gives – that her life would be in danger. In both *Spider-Man* and *Spider-Man 2*, Peter's battles with his super-nemeses – whether they know his identity (as the Green Goblin/Norman Osborn did) or not – place both Mary Jane and Aunt May in mortal danger. Each super-villain first attacks Aunt May, and then abducts Mary Jane, drawing Peter into a final confrontation. If Peter's desire is to safeguard Mary Jane, he's 0 for 2 – his plan is clearly not working. Something else is at work, and his opening narration ultimately fits better than his more public explanations.

The true source of his belief that his noble life and romance are incompatible comes from his foster parents – Uncle Ben and Aunt May. In his imagination, Peter confronts the memory of his Uncle Ben with his love for Mary Jane, and his choice to abandon being Spider-Man. Uncle Ben says, "Of all the times we talked of honesty, fairness, justice. A lot of those times I counted on you to have the courage to take those dreams out into the world…You've been given a gift, Peter. With great power, comes great responsibility." But even more, the idea finds deeper expression with Aunt May – in a speech she gives Peter (after, I believe, she's realized that Peter is Spider-Man, although the movie itself is ambiguous on that point), she says, "I believe there's a hero in all of us…even though sometimes we have to be steady, and give up the thing we want the most. Even our dreams."

Where the track of these two heroes split is how their directors view the effects of romance on them. Interestingly, in both Episode II and *Spider-Man 2*, both Anakin and Peter twice lose the totemistic symbols of their powers – Anakin losing his lightsaber, and Peter losing his webbing. In both cases, these losses occur in proximity with developments in their relationships with their love interests. Within hours of reuniting for the first time with Padmé, Anakin loses his lightsaber during the chase with Zam Wessel. The second time he loses his lightsaber is on the rescue operation on Geonosis – undertaken in cooperation with Padmé.

For Peter – it is the *absence* of Mary Jane that causes his webbing (a biological function) to fail him. The first time is after witnessing Mary Jane kissing her then-boyfriend John Jameson. The second time is immediately after witnessing the announcement of Mary Jane's engagement to the same Captain Jameson. Even after Aunt May's speech, when Peter wants to unmake his choice to be Spider-Man no more, he physically can't without Mary Jane. He attempts to test his powers – to test leaping from building to building – a simple feat when his spider-powers are functional. Instead, he ends up literally on his back.

(As an aside – it might be noted that both the lightsaber and the webbing can be seen as symbols of male sexuality. The lightsaber as phallus, and the biologically-created webbing as a stand-in for another substance secreted by the male body. The loss of both of these symbols would represent a rendering of impotence – but with opposite causes in each case.)

Both men, similarly, face what they believe to be a moment of choice between their heroic careers and their love interests. Although Peter seems to be given more time to think about it than Anakin. For Anakin, the key moment comes on the clone trooper transport after Padmé falls out. He wants to stop and tend to her, and Obi-Wan tells him that if he does, he will be expelled from the Jedi Order. Faced with this choice, Anakin ultimately chooses to follow his commitment to duty – as he believes Padmé would do in his place.

And leaving the Jedi Order, although "not easy" in Obi-Wan's words, *is* possible. We learn early in the movie that Count Dooku – once an accomplished Jedi – left the Order for personal and political reasons. Although it turns out that Dooku left to join the Dark Side and become Sith, the Jedi do not know this. This establishes that withdrawing from the Order – although rare – *is* an option that would be open to Anakin, but one he decides against.

Peter, on the other hand, spends an agonized night trying to decide between what he sees as his possibility for a normal life, and his super responsibility. He dreams of his deceased Uncle Ben (Uncle Ben's murder – in which a newly-empowered Peter failed to take an opportunity to stop the thief who then murdered Ben – serves as the root cause of Peter's original choice to be a superhero) who tries to convince him not to abandon his life as Spider-Man. Peter makes the opposite choice – at that point – from Anakin. He decides to be "Spider-Man no more," and to pursue both a "normal" life, and Mary Jane.

To further the split, Padmé's being in danger causes Anakin to act recklessly when he and Obi-Wan confront Count Dooku, resulting in the loss of his right arm – another image of emasculation.

On the other hand, Doc Ock's abduction of Mary Jane brings Peter's spider-abilities back to full power, apparently permanently (symbolized by Peter's final abandonment of his glasses).

But the most profound difference is the circumstances of the fulfillment of the relationships, when the women in the heroes' lives announce their decisions to start romantic relationships.

Padmé's confesses her love to Anakin as they're both being led into the Geonosian arena to be executed. But more than that – her reason for admitting her feelings then is that it no longer matters – that the danger of destroying their lives is moot, as their lives are about to end anyway. "I thought we had decided not to fall in love, that we would be forced to live a lie and that it would destroy our lives," Anakin says to her. She replies, "I think our lives are about to be destroyed anyway." And, without either of them knowing that Mace Windu and a troop of Jedi (and clone troopers) are on their way, the threat of death is entirely credible at that point. Her admission comes within the shadow of imminent death on an insect-infested, industrial desert planet.

On the other hand, Mary Jane (after leaving Captain Jameson at the altar), tells Peter that she won't take his "no" for an answer is in the bloom of life. We see her, on her way to Peter's apartment, running in her wedding gown through a Madison Square Park in mid-Spring bloom, with a fountain running full-splash behind her. And her confession to Peter could not contrast more with Padmé's to Anakin: "It's wrong that we should only be half alive – half of ourselves," she says. And then, "Isn't it about time somebody saved *your* life?" She argues that Peter's choice between being with her and being Spider-Man is a false dichotomy. And not only *can* he have both, he *should*.

One note here, though. I've observed that Mary Jane's confession of love is in the context of living Spring, but Peter's confession of love to Mary Jane would appear to take place, like Padmé's, in the shadow of death. While holding up a wall that had been about to crash on Mary Jane, Peter says, "[I]n case we die…" and Mary Jane finishes, "You *do* love me." But unlike the prelude to the arena on Geonosis, this threat of death isn't credible. Both Peter and the audience know that he's not really having serious trouble holding up the wall (the strain is nothing compared to, say, stopping the runaway L-train earlier in the movie), and that they will both survive. It is a sort of psychological trick on himself on Peter's part. And as he's got little to lose at that point, already having revealed his Spider-Man secret to her.

But the most profound difference is the circumstances of the fulfillment of the relationships, when the women in the heroes' lives announce their decisions to start romantic relationships.

As for the future implications of the consummation of these two relationships, it remains to be seen exactly how both will play out in their respective third sequels. But the implication – from both the trailer and from some comments from Lucas on the Episode II DVD – is that Anakin's marriage to Padmé will figure in his slide to the Dark Side.

On the other hand, for Peter Parker, the implication is that his relationships both with Mary Jane and with his Aunt May will strengthen him, his spider-powers, and his commitment to bearing his great responsibility. J. Michael Straczynski, the current writer of the flagship (and founding) Spider-Man comic book title, *Amazing Spider-Man*, notes on the *Spider-Man 2* DVD bonus featurette, "The Women of Spider-Man," that "[Peter] got his powers from the spider bite, but he got his strength from Aunt May."

In the current run of the *Amazing Spider-Man* comic book, when Peter is finally reconciled with Mary Jane after a long estrangement, he says,

I can do “all these things” [i.e., be Spider-Man] because you believe in me. Because you give me the strength and the will to get them done. Everything’s easier when you’re there and harder when you’re not. Without you, nothing works the way it should. But when I know you’re in my life, I feel like I can do anything, MJ. Anything. (Straczynski, *Amazing Spider-Man*, Volume 2, #50, 2002)

And although this story is external to Raimi’s films, I think it is ultimately consistent with the view of these two characters and their relationship.

For Sam Raimi’s Peter Parker/Spider-Man, *Spider-Man 2* described a journey away from a false dichotomy between love and the hero’s life. While for George Lucas’ Anakin Skywalker, the journey toward romantic love will end in a tragic fall to the Dark Side.

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Recommendation

From the Source

Title: The Mythology of *Star Wars*
ISBN: unknown
Produced By: Public Affairs Television; Thirteen/WNET New York
Copyright: 1999
Length: 57 minutes

Reviewed by Lady Aeryn.

One afternoon in early 1999 Bill Moyers, noted journalist and longtime friend of the great mythological scholar Joseph Campbell (a mentor for George Lucas and whose studies Lucas has long acknowledged as a foundation for the framework of the *Star Wars* series) conducted a dialogue with Lucas at Lucas's Skywalker Ranch. They discussed Lucas's various inspirations, both mythological and personal, for the *Star Wars* saga and touched on some of the saga's basic themes, too much to go into detail on in a review. *The Mythology of Star Wars* shows us the highlights of this discussion, punctuated with appropriate clips from the original *Star Wars* trilogy as well as the then newly-released *The Phantom Menace*.

The discussion reveals that the inspiration for many elements in *Star Wars* comes from Lucas's personal quest to resolve his own questions of faith and religion, to aid others (more specifically, young people) who haven't yet formed beliefs on matters like the nature of God. Lucas describes searching across different myths and religions of different cultures for the most common ideas and beliefs that seemed to be shared by the most groups of people; when he sat down to write the *Star Wars* story many elements (the temptation of a hero by an evil force, the discovery of a mysterious child with a seemingly divine aura, etc.) came naturally as a result of this exploration, not being drawn from any specific culture. Lucas also tells of the journey of Anakin Skywalker/Darth Vader coming from his exploration of the nature of humanity and what in that nature gives us the capacity for good or evil – a question which Lucas admits he still hasn't found an answer to.

Certain aspects of the saga are also shown to be direct influences from Lucas's own family experience. He admits to a bit of autobiography of his own apparently bittersweet relationship with his father in the scenes with Luke and Darth Vader, to the relationship between Luke and his mentors mirroring somewhat Lucas's own relationships with his mentors. He talks about his pursuing a life in filmmaking as opposed to taking up his father's family business as what Campbell referred to as "[following] your bliss," following your intuition and feelings to find your place in life, your destiny, which is what "feeling the Force" essentially is. He speaks of his belief that the most fulfilling purpose of life is having children, that a person is redeemed by their children, as Anakin is by his.

Just as much as this is an insight into the saga, it's an insight into Lucas himself. Fifty-seven minutes isn't the ideal amount of time to more deeply explore the topics Moyers and Lucas touch upon – I found myself wishing we'd been shown more than an hour of this discussion – but with the time alloted, this presentation still provides a well-rounded look at Lucas's thought processes and experiences and how they wound up helping shape *Star* Wars as we know it. It's not at all necessary to already be well-versed in mythological or religious studies to understand this discussion, which makes this a good introduction or Cliff Notes for anyone interested in exploring the background and inspirations behind the saga.

Since this title is not currently being produced on video or DVD, finding a copy may be tricky (my own copy is a rather worn six-year-old recording of the original PBS broadcast). However, if you're at all interested in background information on the inspirations of the saga, it's worth the effort to look for. Your best bet on locating a copy would probably be to look at your local library, or at online auctions such as Amazon and Ebay.

Discovering *Star Wars*

rhonderoo

I remember the summer of 1978 as probably one of the best summers of my life so far, if not the best. I remember my aunt, who was a *Star Wars* nut, telling me we going to see *Star Wars*. I was so excited.

By the time *Empire Strikes Back* came out, you were nobody if you hadn't seen *Star Wars*, and everybody who was anybody was talking about the fact that Darth Vader had lied to Luke and told him that he was his father. I remember saying there was NO WAY that Darth Vader could be Luke's father. He wasn't human!

When *Return of the Jedi* came out, my cousin Kenny and I bet each other a buck over the fate of Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader. Kenny was convinced this was Luke's last hurrah. I had faith in the villain that had stolen the show in *Star Wars* a few years back. *Empire Strikes Back* had taught me that if Vader could let Piett live, there was good in there.

In my wildest dreams I could not imagine how it would have turned out. I won that dollar and the right to say "I told you so" all summer. I still hold that over Kenny's head, and he holds the fact that I cried like a baby through the whole unmasking scene, and still do to this day, over my head.

Issue 3

March 2005

Always Three There Are

by Lady Aeryn

Few myths have as strong a visible influence on the *Star Wars* saga as that of the one surrounding King Arthur Pendragon and his fabled kingdom of Camelot. The comparisons between the two sagas could span a series of essays. Both are tales of a war-ravaged world populated with knightly and magical figures, of a young man with an epic lineage and a fallen father, whisked away at birth from any knowledge of that lineage or the destiny it entails, and who is one day swept up by a wise mentor and set on the journey to fulfill that destiny. Each is also the tale of the downfall of a man and a world, a downfall that at its heart involves the betrayal of a son and the doomed affair of two forbidden lovers.

It is little wonder, then, that the most famous element of Arthurian myth should be a critical story element of the *Star Wars* saga as well. For years the idea of a love triangle in the prequels between Anakin Skywalker, Padmé Amidala, and Obi-Wan Kenobi was a common and hotly debated fan speculation. Like the epic triangle of Arthur, his queen Guinevere, and his knight Sir Lancelot du Lac which had brought down Camelot, the theory's proponents argued, this triangle would be the downfall of all three people involved – particularly Anakin – and also herald the fall of the Republic.

These fans would be right, though not in the way most of them imagined.

Many variations on the Arthur myth – the triangle included – exist, but the basic story remains the same. Arthur arranges to marry the beautiful Guinevere against warning from the wizard Merlin that she will love someone else. When Lancelot arrives at Camelot and becomes the greatest knight of the King's Order of the Round Table – as well as Guinevere's sworn champion – he and the queen do fall in love, embarking on a forbidden and secret affair. Out of love for Arthur and desire to uphold their responsibilities, neither lover is willing to run away together; nor does Arthur acknowledge the affair, knowing he would have to punish his beloved wife *and* his best friend. Arthur's bastard son Mordred forces the issue when he publicly reveals the affair out of spite; Guinevere is sentenced to death for treason and Lancelot is banished from Camelot. Lancelot rescues her and spirits her away, and the remaining knights of the Round Table push Arthur to make war against him, resulting in the Order's disintegration. During this battle Mordred attempts to seize control of Arthur's kingdom, after which Arthur meets him in a duel, where they kill one another. In grief over the fall of Camelot and her husband's death, and her guilt over the affair which was the catalyst for the fall, Guinevere spends the rest of her life in a nunnery in penitence, begging Lancelot to never see her again.[1]

The reigning *Star Wars* triangle theory called for the prequel trio's relationship to be a carbon copy of the dynamics of the Camelot triangle: It was a practically foregone plot element that Padmé would be engaged/married to Anakin, which meant that for this trio to "truly" duplicate the Camelot triangle, Padmé and Obi-Wan had to be the tragic lovers. This theory died with the release of Episode II, the film in which the prequel triangle's true arrangement also came to the fore.

Few myths have as strong a visible influence on the *Star Wars* saga as that of the one surrounding King Arthur Pendragon and his fabled kingdom of Camelot.

Without any injection of romance between Obi-Wan and Padmé, the love triangle in the prequel trilogy and triangle in Arthurian myth already share very strong likenesses in both the natures of the individual characters and their interactions with one another. Each trio consists of an older and good-hearted but somewhat naive hero figure, a passionate and gifted young

knight, and a beautiful noble lady. Each has the knight and lady playing tragic lovers caught between love and their sworn duties to the outside world – duties represented by the third person in the triangle – in a battle that will be at the heart of their downfall.
Aside from fitting into similar archetypes, each character even shares a comparable fate to that of their other-triangle counterpart. Anakin and Lancelot both have mystical backgrounds, are raised by solitary female figures (Anakin his mother and Lancelot a sorceress[2]) and grow up with the potential to be the greatest Knights either of their realms ever knew. Each will truly love only one woman his entire life, a love that will be forbidden and cause his downfall as well as hers. Both fail in their ultimate quests (Anakin becoming a true Jedi, Lancelot achieving the Holy Grail) because of attachment to those women, but father pure and chaste sons who do succeed in those quests.[3] Padmé, like Guinevere, is a beautiful noble lady who spends most of her life dedicated to serving a greater purpose[4], who finds passion with a young knight but because of it later loses both him and the world she dedicated herself to.[5] Obi-Wan, like Arthur, is the oldest, wisest, and least impetuous of the three, the embodiment of duty and responsibility, though each seems to have/turn a blind eye toward the forbidden love affair happening before him.[6] He is the one who, though of noble intent, still ends up with his life and the world he spent his own life upholding unraveling. Like Arthur, his greatest betrayal – and eventual death – comes at the hands of one he'd known as a son.[7]

Though the general structure of both triangles is the same, there are a couple of slight structural differences. One is that in the prequel version, the married couple and the forbidden love couple are one and the same. Padmé and Anakin are their saga's Guinevere and Lancelot, and Obi-Wan the symbolic Arthur not in any sort of marriage to Padmé, but as the embodiment of the obligations of the lovers that made a relationship between them impractical and forbidden. (As a Jedi in service of the Republic he represents both orders, whom Anakin – whose oath expressly forbids an attachment to anyone outside the Jedi – and Padmé both have previously sworn loyalties to. Guinevere swore an oath to Arthur by marrying him; Lancelot swore one to Arthur when Arthur knighted him.) Anakin and Padmé choose to pursue the relationship but keep it a secret, but, as with their Arthurian mirror, this decision will not lead to a happy ending for the lovers.

With Padmé and Anakin comprising both the married and the forbidden couple of the triangle, it also meant that she, the woman, was not the one at the main point of division between the three people – the second major difference between the triangles. Their romance is, as in its counterpart, a crucial driving force of the triangle, but someone else is the focal point, wherein lies an arrangement that makes this triangle just as destructive – perhaps even moreso – than the Camelot one.

"He feels very passionately about becoming a great Jedi, but at the same time he feels so passionately for Padmé, and it's that confusion that really causes him all of his anxiety," says Anakin actor Hayden Christensen about his character in Episode II[8], laying out the true love triangle of the prequels: it is *Anakin* caught in the middle, torn between two separate but equally important lives. The prequel trilogy story is essentially how the Camelot triangle might have unfolded with Lancelot instead of Guinevere as its focal point.

Anakin's fall to the Dark Side comes not from the woman he loves loving someone else, but from himself being the one in the middle. With Padmé, Anakin has the possibility of true love and a family; with Obi-Wan and the Jedi he has the ability to fulfill his dreams of power and adventure, to make a difference in the galaxy. By choosing to still remain in the Jedi Order but marry Padmé in secret, Anakin shows his great flaw in being unwilling/unable to part with either her or his life as a Jedi. The circumstances of his society do not allow him to remain on this fence, and by the time of the original trilogy of Episodes IV through VI he has lost both his love *and* his life as a Jedi, becoming a machine

enslaved to a dark power. The irony is that *had* he chosen one relationship and given up the other, he would still have been incomplete, as – like with Lancelot – the other two in the triangle represent equally important needs of his character. Largely due to the circumstances of his time, however, true balance eludes him, and will elude him until his son Luke – who does successfully manage to reconcile love and duty in his heart – comes into his life.

Both triangles are a model of a sense of completeness that can only come about when their three parts are present and balanced, a balance which the laws of both triangles' societies greatly hinder any chance of. The Camelot triangle is also actually more equilateral than the *Star Wars* one in this regard: to take any one of the Camelot three away from the other two would leave those two equally incomplete, as displayed when Arthur, Guinevere, and Lancelot are each equally incapable of choosing between the two other sides and resolving the triangle. The *Star Wars* version maintains this only as far as Anakin is concerned: to take either Obi-Wan/the Jedi or Padmé away from him would leave him an incomplete individual, and to take Anakin away would – and ultimately does – leave Obi-Wan and Padmé incomplete as well. However, the loss of Obi-Wan would not – at least as of the end of Episode II – significantly diminish Padmé, nor vice versa. But both triangles still represent the inevitable collapse of those involved when nothing is successfully done to resolve an existing imbalance, instead making it worse.

The triangles in both epics are triangles of the most classic sort, pitting love and passion against duty and brutally highlighting the consequences that befall those who do not resolve the battle. The prequel triangle is a symbol of the conflict of the entire *Star Wars* saga, the conflict Anakin was prophesied to resolve: bringing balance to the imbalanced (in this case, the Force), a balance that is achieved only once Anakin is able to find the right balance within himself.

Notes/Sources:

[1] Thomas Malory, *Le Morte d'Arthur [The Death of Arthur]*, in Don Nardo, *Heroes and Villains: King Arthur*. (Lucent Books, 2003.) Pg. 80.

[2] "Lancelot du Lac." *Timeless Myths: Arthurian Legends*.

[3] "Lancelot does not achieve the Grail himself, because of his adulterous love, yet ironically the same sin has produced Galahad, the knight who does." Lacy, Norris J. and Geoffrey Ashe. *The Arthurian Handbook*. (Garland Publishing, Inc., New York, 1997.) Pg. 307.

[4] Green, Thomas. "Arthurian Characters: Gwenhwyfar [Guinevere]." *Arthurian Resources*.

[5] "I was a queen, and he who loved me best / Made me a woman for a night and day, / And now I go unqueened forevermore." Teasdale, Sara. "Guenevere." (poem)

[6] The events on Geonosis near the ending of Episode II leave significant room for the possibility that Obi-Wan is aware of mutual feelings between Anakin and Padmé. Various pieces of film-supplementary literature taking place between Episodes II and III, such as issue #2 of the Dark Horse comic *Obsession*, follow the idea that Obi-Wan is indeed aware of a P/A relationship (though perhaps not of the true depth of it), even covering somewhat for it.

[7] Wolfson, Evelyn. *King Arthur and his Knights in Mythology*. (Enslow Publishers, Inc., Berkeley Heights, NJ, 2002.) Pg. 112-116.

[8] Hayden Christensen, *Star Wars Episode II: Attack of the Clones* "Love" DVD featurette. (Lucasfilm Ltd., 2002.)

Counter-Insurgency and the Rise of the Empire

by Sean Dineen

"Begun the Clone War has."[1]

What on earth do the government changes of a fictional society have to do with struggles that western nations have faced for nearly sixty years?

Both societies are connected by a struggle against the unique form of warfare known as an insurgency. Since the end of the Second World War, the powers that have exercised hegemony over this planet have avoided another such full-scale conflict in favor of indirect probing, and war through proxies. The Cold War and the more recent struggle against terrorism and the misuse of Islam have led to the diffusion of goals often seen in these type of conflicts – what former Malayan Defense Secretary Sir Robert Thompson called, "A world-wide front in which fifty people fight for different reasons and causes all relating to the same goal."[2]

A similar state of affairs is true in the *Star Wars* universe as a leading member of the royal court reminds Senator Amidala, "There hasn't been a full scale war for a thousand years, since the formation of the Republic."[3] Local conflicts are vulnerable to exploitation because of a lack of large-scale protective forces. This is understood ten years earlier just prior to the battle of Naboo. Queen Amidala is reminded of that by her guard commander and protector, "We have no army."[4] The Gungans, a formally isolated people, are transformed into allies by the Queen's plea. "We beg you to help us, Boss Nass."[5]

Counter-insurgency is best understood as the attempt of a government to defend itself from an armed guerilla force that is posing as an alternative government. The government in power employs a strategy that is a combination of political and military means, which seeks not a mere defeat of opposing forces but the reintegration of the best of the other side into a purified society.

Many fans saw Cold War metaphors throughout the Original Trilogy. The Empire was seen as both representing the United States' desire for world hegemony and the political dictatorship of the Soviet Union. The Ewoks make use of hit and run, Viet Cong style tactics in the effort to defend their homeland of Endor. Their logs and catapults defeat the bumbling, technological, soulless Imperial military, an archetypical representation of the confused and sometimes brutal American military in Vietnam. *Return of the Jedi* novelist James Kahn, himself an advisor to the New Zealand forces in that tragic conflict, makes a good point concerning the over-stretching of forces, and lack of local support that governments often face in trying to wage a counter-insurgency. "The Empire, bent on conquest, was fighting on a large scale front of unknown territory, it knew nothing of local natives or their talents; any large scale force fighting guerrillas is always losing unless it wins. While rebels, who know how to make friends, are always winning unless they lose."[6]

The newer films focus on a society in chaos, looking for a strong hand to impose order by almost any means on an isolated and unresponsive government. The Jedi, as protectors, have become in the minds of at least some, above the cares and systems that the average citizen must deal with and interact with on a daily basis. The Council in particular cannot bring itself to interact in political affairs, and in wanting to avoid corruption, they allow it to go unchecked.

This corruption and chaos is of course being created by the soon-to-be-Emperor, Sith Master Sidious in his guise as Supreme Chancellor Palpatine. He understands that groups and individuals that are

underrepresented or discriminated against by any government tend to wish to alter and change it for both selfish and noble reasons. Sidious's last two Sith Apprentices, Count Dooku and Darth Vader, were initially seduced by a desire to repair a galaxy in pain and collapse, only to find themselves using their gifts and powers to do so in ways that the Jedi do not approve of. John Nagl makes a similar point about such yearnings in our world with his study of the Portuguese attempts to maintain their colonies in Africa. They failed despite past successes because they did not give an outlet to local educated Africans while others did. "Revolutionary movements always attract those whose talents have been ignored. Because they tend to be looser, aware of grievances, and drawn from locals, they promise a place and an outlet for the hungry and the useful."[7] The Portuguese, while avoiding racism, restricted the vote to those who had embraced Catholicism and a long series of rules of assimilation. The reputation for fairness that had long allowed their colonies to survive was destroyed because they spent too much time punishing those who failed while ignoring those who helped.

Count Dooku, in his role as disenfranchised Jedi and Separatist leader, well embraced the desire for a change in government from both within and without.

Count Dooku, in his role as disenfranchised Jedi and Separatist leader, well embraced the desire for a change in government from both within and without. "The Republic cannot be fixed, it's time to start over."[8] He also realized, as did his Master, that "People are attracted to dictatorship because it promises unity, and quick, painless solutions to problems."[9] Any political system of long standing resists change, because it sees itself as providing the greatest good for the largest number. This makes rebellion seductive because those on the other side are more flexible. "The leadership of any movement to destroy a system is effective because it usually arises out of true discontent. Its heads talk about the problems of the people, while the government talks about the rebels. It appears to care, and works tirelessly to sooth, while the current powers warn and chastise."[10]

Anakin is particularly vulnerable to Sidious's theories because he has been cut off from his love and his mother by rules. As Palpatine, he promises Anakin the freedom to please himself after a lifetime of bossing. "You don't need guidance…in time you will learn to trust your feelings, then you will be invincible."[11] Palpatine sponsors an updated approach of the bullets and bread ideal of power. The population is fed, amused, and kept in line at all costs. Potential rivals are quickly, if not painlessly, dispatched. Anakin Skywalker has implanted in him from his early life as a slave a spirit of obedience. Unfortunately it is a spirit which the Jedi can use for noble purposes and the Dark Lord for evil ones. Of the two, Palpatine is the one who makes him want to obey because, like the Devil, he disguises his seduction as fatherly concern and a desire to help. By the time Darth Vader really understood what he had become, there was too much blood on his hands, it seemed impossible to change back to the light. "It is too late for me, Son."[12]

Obi-Wan truly cared for the welfare of his ward but was very bound up in following rules to the detriment of their relationship. In contrast, Yoda and Qui-Gon, just as devoted to principles, seemed to find ways to create a bond between themselves and those they are teaching. Their work found the Padawan's inner needs and strengths, shaping them to the path of the Republic and the Order in a gentle way, without assuming a carping manner. Anakin, like so many today, needed constant reinforcement. If their talents go unrewarded, they become deeply hurt. The need for nurturing would be very powerful for someone who has suffered his kind of trauma. The Emperor, more than once and for his own purposes, gives our tragic hero a sense that his desires are very important. The Jedi could have learned much from the idea that "Government must not show a fist at the expense of a parent's embrace."[13]

Like the government of Rhodesia, the old Jedi order sought to isolate its children from all temptations and most joy as a goad towards inner mastery. “Fear of disrupting Christian civilized standards caused the betrayal time and again of loyal Africans and mixed race members of the Rhodesian Nation.”[14] Everything was way too harsh and too slow. The Jedi were like both sides in the counter-insurgency struggle to win over the disillusioned to their side of the struggle. They were to be with the people but not of them.

The classic example of this benevolent reclamation mindset was given by C.C. Too, Chairman of the Psychological Warfare Department of both British and free Malaysia. “One act of kindness, a propaganda of the deed, is worth a million fancy phrases. The wavering member of the rebel army will not be bullied by threats or seduced by promises, but will be won over if he can be shown he does have lasting value to his fatherland. This respect for his good intentions will be accepted by someone aware of but outside his current circle.”[15] Leaders of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front, the official name of the Viet Cong, took great pains to publicize their welcoming arms to what they called misguided slaves of American imperialism and puppets of the Thieu clique.[16]

Counter-insurgency worked in Greece and Malaya, while it failed in Rhodesia and Vietnam, because the first two governments made use of defectors while the last rained down power at the expense of development and changing opinion.

I am truly pleased at the parallels between this flawed world of ours and the Galaxy Far, Far, Away.

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[1] Salvatore, R. A. *Star Wars, Episode II: Attack of the Clones*. Delray, New York, 2002. 356.

[2] Thompson, Sir Robert. *Peace is not at Hand.* Chitto Press, London, United Kingdom, 1974, 119.

[3] Salvatore, 22.

[4] Brooks, Terry. *Star Wars, Episode I: The Phantom Menace*. Delray, New York, 1999, 213.

[5] Brooks, 224.

[6] Kahn, James. *Star Wars, Episode VI: Return of the Jedi.* Bantam, New York, 1983, 109.

[7] Nagl, John. *Counter-Insurgency in Africa.* Prager, South Carolina, 1997, 123.

[8] Salvatore, 402.

[9] Barbour, Noel. *The War of the Running Dogs.* Doubleday, New York, 1971.

[10] Nagl, 45.

[11] Salvatore, 56.

[12] Kahn, 222.

[13] Barbour, 55.

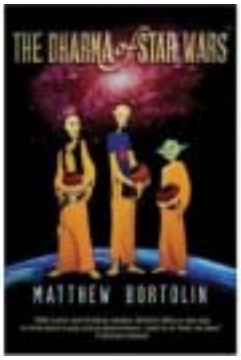
[14] Ellert, Henry. *The Rhodesian Front War*. Mombo Press, Harare, Zimbabwe, 1986, 59.

[15] Thompson, 66.

[16] Nagl, 66.

Recommendation

The Jedi's Path to Enlightenment



Title: The Dharma of *Star Wars*
Author: Matthew Bortolin
ISBN: 0-86171-497-0
Publisher: Wisdom Publications
Copyright: 2005

Reviewed by lazypadawan.

There have been quite a few references to the influence of Eastern culture on the *Star Wars* films, whether it's the films of Akira Kurosawa, the vaguely Japanese look of the Jedi tunic, or even George Lucas admitting in an interview that he considers himself a "Methodist-Buddhist."

In *The Dharma of Star Wars*, *Star Wars* fan and Buddhist Matthew Bortolin both analyzes the saga from his religious perspective and uses the saga to illustrate the Buddha's teachings. He hopes to show *Star Wars* in a new light as well as help us find some enlightenment at the same time. The book aspires to show us the way of "Jedi mindfulness" in our everyday lives. At the end of the book, there is "The Padawan Handbook: Zen Contemplations For The Would-Be Jedi" to practice what you have learned. They are *Star Wars*-themed contemplations such as, "A Jedi who is ruled by anger, by hatred, by jealousy, by desire is bound to the dark side just as a swoop is bound to terrestrial flight."

As is the case with just about every book written about *Star Wars* from a particular religious point-of-view, beginning with Frank Allnut's *The Force of Star Wars* in 1978, the saga is in part a hook to get you in the door, so to speak. *Star Wars* is filled with allegories and themes that find resonance in any number of religions. Lucas is a student of comparative religion and anthropology, after all. For Bortolin, the saga provides a hook to explain tenets of Buddhism in a way most people would understand it. Even though there are elements of Buddhism in the saga, as Bortolin admits, it's not a Buddhist saga as a whole. In other words, this book is a little bit more about using *Star Wars* to understand Buddhism rather than using Buddhism to understand *Star Wars*.

It isn't to say there aren't interesting insights about the films. This book is perhaps most helpful to fans who find it perplexing when Lucas talks about Anakin's "greed" or the problems associated with attachment. In fact, Bortolin frequently uses Anakin as an example of a being who suffers and therefore causes others to suffer. Qui-Gon provides a great example of "mindfulness," and while Obi-Wan gets points for comprehending the interconnectedness of everything, Bortolin points out Obi-Wan makes the error of shutting Anakin out of his heart after Anakin's turn to the dark side. The chapter "Luke Skywalker's Practice of Wisdom" nails precisely why Luke succeeds in his quest and redeems his father (hint...it has something to do with compassion). There is a chapter on Jedi and violence where Bortolin attempts to reconcile his pacifist religion with the Jedi's acts of violence. It's food for thought, whether or not you agree with his perspective.

The book won't necessarily convert you to Buddhism, but it does make for an entertaining crash course. You'll learn a lot about the basics and Bortolin clears up some common misconceptions. Nirvana, for instance, isn't heaven nor is it something one attains like a goal. Rather it is something pervasive in everything and is yet beyond all concepts and ideas.

It’s hard not to enjoy a book with chapter titles like “Darth Vader’s Karma” or “Transforming Our Jar Jar Nature.” Bortolin manages to write a book that will appeal to *Star Wars* fans, to fellow Buddhists looking for insights from popular culture, and to people who are just curious about Buddhism.

Discovering *Star Wars*

Darth Pipes

I don't remember the first time I saw *Star Wars*. But I know I've been a fan as long as I can remember.

Star Wars was my absolute favorite growing up. Along with *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, I watched it constantly after school. This interest was shared with my brother and the rest of my family and friends. I would go out for Halloween dressed as a character, and for Christmas every *Star Wars* toy imaginable was under the tree. I had piles of *Return of the Jedi* cards. Even after interest in the saga waned in the late-80s, I still occasionally came home from school and popped in the films.

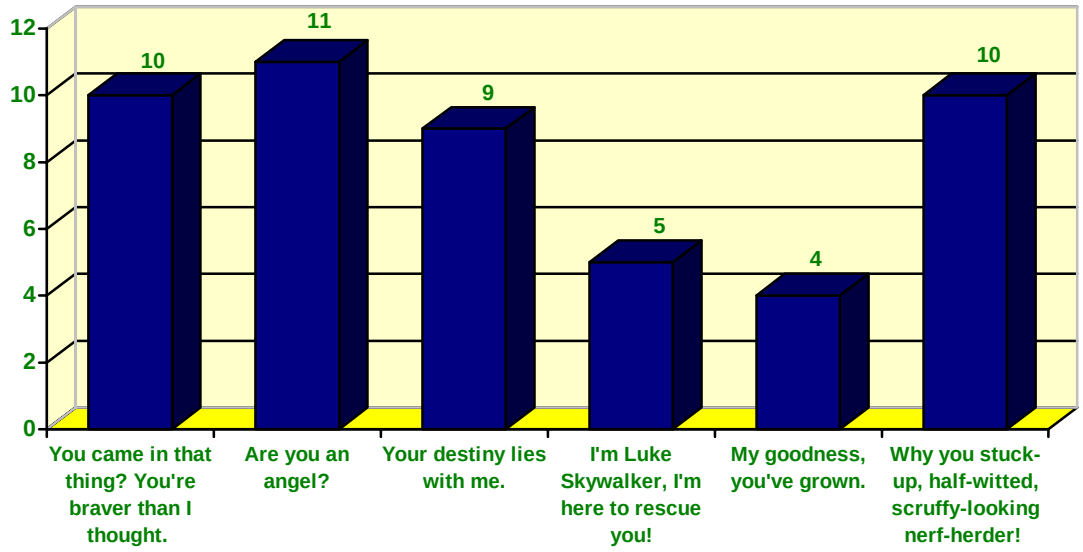
With the Special Editions, I finally was able to see the films on the big screen. It's an interesting experience watching a movie in theaters that everyone has seen countless times. They know when to laugh and cheer. Seeing *Star Wars* on the big screen was probably the most fun I ever had at the movies.

Star Wars is why I'm such a big fan of science fiction/fantasy. It's a movie where you just lose yourself in the action and go along with the characters for the ride – it's the ultimate adventure. As I've grown older, I've also learned to appreciate themes that are prevalent in the film, such as destiny, friendship, and redemption.

I've become a fan of many different movies and book series over the years, but it's always *Star Wars* I return to.

Poll Results:

If you *had* to, which of the following would you use as a pick-up line?



Issue 4

April 2005

Princess Leia and the Woman Warrior

by lazypadawan

One of the rarest but also one of the most fascinating archetypes in literature is the fabled woman warrior. The reason why it is intriguing and rare is because women are traditionally life-givers and nuturers. Fighting and violence are antithetical to this role.

Nevertheless, the woman warrior arises from time to time. Greek mythology gave birth to the famed Amazon warriors. Ancient Hawaii had the sister of the goddess Pele, Hiiaka, who fought demons with "a bamboo knife in one hand and a lightning skirt in another."[1] Celtic lore had the warrior queen Medb.[2]

History had a few real-life women warriors. Boadicea (also known as Boudiccea or Boudicca) led the ancient Celtic Iceni tribe in a violent two-year uprising against the Romans.[3] There is of course the very famous Joan (Jeanne) of Arc, the young teenage girl who went from being an illiterate peasant to leading armies against the English and their Burgundian allies.[4]

Modern popular culture had comic book heroines like Wonder Woman (herself an Amazon) and JRR Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* series featured a woman warrior, Eowyn. 1990s television brought about *Xena: The Warrior Princess* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. But the character who popularized the woman warrior in modern cinema was Princess Leia Organa. In many ways, Leia follows this old archetype and in other ways, she is different. "(The princess in peril) is the one we have seen time and time again in fairy tales and legends of knights in shining armor with their damsels in distress; this is Leia's starting point. This is the one we thought she was until she opened her mouth."[5] As Carrie Fisher has put it, Leia isn't so much a damsel in distress as she is a distressing damsel.

Most woman warriors arise out of necessity, since it has generally not been a traditional role for women. Usually, women have been pressed into warrior or defender roles if there is a shortage of men or there is no strong male leader. Amazon society was a matriarchy, ruled by two queens.[6] The women rarely associated with men, except to produce more Amazon offspring.[7] Boys born to the Amazons were killed, crippled in some way and kept as slaves, kept and raised for mating purposes, or given to a neighboring tribe.[8] Boadicea's husband, the King of the Iceni, died in 60 AD. The Romans publicly beat Boadicea and raped her daughters during a dispute over distribution of the king's lands after his death.[9] Joan of Arc would never have donned armor had the voices of Saint Catherine, Saint Michael, and Saint Margaret not asked her to do so.[10] France at that time had a dauphin meant for the throne, but the English and the Burgundians controlled a significant amount of territory, including its capital Paris. Resistance to the occupation was weak and disorganized.[11]

There are plenty of men present in the *Star Wars* galaxy, but before the Battle of Yavin the rebellion against the Empire was small, outmatched in resources and firepower. Leia grew up on a pacifist planet. ("Alderaan is peaceful. We have no weapons.") According to the radio version of *A New Hope* and other background sources, she did covert missions for the Alliance, using her status as an Imperial senator as cover. *A New Hope* however, shows her clearly at home with using a blaster when necessary. *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi* show her as a full-time fighter since she no longer has a home planet or a position with the dissolved Senate. She emerges as a leading figure within the (mostly male) Alliance, which is itself led by a woman, Mon Mothma. Her mother Padmé also came from a pacifist planet, vowing not to take any actions that would lead to war, until realizing it was going to take a lot more than talk to save her world. It is noteworthy that while Queen Amidala had the protection of two male Jedi Knights, sought help from the heavily male Senate, and had mostly men serving her, none

of them besides young Anakin Skywalker had the power to defeat the Trade Federation. It was mostly because of her ability to form an alliance with the Gungans and her plan to capture the Viceroy that the Naboo were victorious.

What made women warriors heroic was the nobility of their cause, which drew others – especially men – to follow them. Boadicea and Joan wanted to free their people, just as Padmé and Leia wanted to free theirs, although Boadicea was also driven by revenge and Joan was driven by her faith as well as her patriotism. Before fighting their last desperate battle against the Romans, Boadicea "and her daughters drove round in her chariot to all her tribes before the battle, exhorting them to be brave. She cried that she was descended from mighty men but she was fighting as an ordinary person for her lost freedom, her bruised body and outraged daughters. Perhaps as a taunt to the men in her ranks, it is said that she asked them to consider: 'Win the battle or perish: that is what I, a woman will do; you men can live on in slavery if that's what you want.'"[12]

Joan wrote in a defiant letter to the English on May 5, 1429: "You, men of England, who have no right to this Kingdom of France, the King of Heaven orders and notifies you through me, Joan the Maiden, to leave your fortresses and go back to your own country; or I will produce a clash of arms to be eternally remembered. And this is the third and last time I have written to you; I shall not write anything further."[13]

Leia never had to give a grandiose speech to her fellow Rebels, but Leia had a way of rallying others to her cause. Luke joins the Alliance as a pilot, and eventually, even a rogue mercenary like Han Solo finds himself a general by the time it's all over. Lando joins not only in Han's rescue, but also in the attack on the second Death Star. It's also through Leia that the Ewoks, who helped turned the tide of the Battle of Endor, became allies.

Women warriors are often noted for their cunning and ruthlessness in battle. Medb of Connacht was considered "wild and willful" and "slaughtered many heroes."[14] Boadicea's two-year fight against the Romans included sacking and razing cities (modern Colchester, London, and St. Albans), and even going as far as killing women and children.[15] Roman historians put the number killed during the uprising at about 70,000.[16]

The Amazons' own bravery and ferocity made them legendary. Myth tells of how they cut off a breast in order to make fighting, particularly with a bow or javelin, easier.[17] They fought on horseback and also used swords and double axes.[18] Homer in *The Iliad* wrote about the Amazons going to Troy in aid of King Priam during the Trojan War, and in another instance, the Amazons invaded Attica and fought in Athens to reclaim their abducted queen.[19]

Leia is never afraid of challenging her enemies or throwing herself into the thick of things, and it has been frequently noted by fans that she's probably the best shot of any of the main characters. When Imperials capture her ship at the beginning of *A New Hope*, she isn't captured without a fight and she's not afraid to argue with Darth Vader. After Luke frees her from her cell aboard the Death Star, Leia immediately takes charge of her own rescue. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, she is clearly in command, giving orders and staying almost until Hoth base is captured. Han practically has to drag her out of the command center. Later on, she attempts to save Han at Cloud City and in *Return of the Jedi*, she takes an active part in his rescue. Jabba the Hutt learns the hard way not to underestimate the strength or righteous anger of the princess. She then takes part in a dangerous mission on Endor. She's the first to pursue fleeing scouts on speeder bikes, barely waiting long enough for Luke to join her. After she is shot

outside of the Imperial bunker, she is prepared to go down fighting, even in the face of impossible odds. However, Leia never would resort to Boadicea's brutality, especially not against civilians.

Because for a long time they bucked tradition, woman warriors are frequently killed or vanquished by their enemies. "It would appear that all through literature that a strong woman must be tragic or evil or sexual, as Ishtar, Aphrodite, Lilith, and all of the other seductresses, good hearted (and bad hearted) hookers, femme fatales, and sensual heroines."[20] This is true in real life as in legend, myth, and literature. The ninth labor Hercules had to perform was securing the Girdle (belt) of Hippolyta, the Amazon queen. Hippolyta was killed in the process.[21] The Athenian hero Theseus abducted Hippolyta's sister Antiope (in other versions he abducts Hippolyta) and married her; the Amazons went to war to get her back. But at Athens they were defeated and Antiope was killed.[22] After the Iceni were defeated, Boadicea is said to have poisoned herself to avoid capture, but other sources say she died of disease in her cell.[23] She is allegedly buried beneath Platform 9 at the King's Cross station in London.[24] Joan of Arc was defeated in battle, left to her fate by the people she supported, sold to the English, accused of heresy, and burned at the stake.[25]

But even though she is put through her own share of perils and trials, Leia doesn't die a horrible death at the hands of her enemies and she never compromises her ideals. As *Star Wars: The New Myth* says of Padmé, "The *Star Wars* universe allows her heroic spirit to thrive by accepting her for herself, not her gender."[26] Leia is not a tragic figure who must suffer a terrible fate for defying the conventions of her time and place. She is never "punished" in the story for simply being a woman fighter.

Leia is not a tragic figure who must suffer a terrible fate for defying the conventions of her time and place. She is never "punished" in the story for simply being a woman fighter.

Her role is also more integrated than what has been found in tradition. This might have to do with the real life changes in sex roles over the past 50 years in Western culture. "Between 1965 and 1975 about ten million women entered the workforce (compared to only seven million men), and by 1975 nearly half of all American women held jobs outside the home. Leia...was a most appropriate heroine for her time."[27] Because *Star Wars* is a product of the late 20th-early 21st century, it features women with "a more developed animus" or male spirit.[28] Joan of Arc famously dressed in men's clothing, but it was done more to protect her modesty among men by playing down her femininity rather than to make a statement against gender roles.[29] Leia takes part in missions, works the command center, gives pep talks to her troops, and can turn any situation into an impromptu diplomatic mission. She is just as comfortable in a uniform as she is in a dress, and is just as comfortable as a symbol of the Alliance as she is an active participant in it.

Unlike most women warriors who are singularly devoted to their tasks, Leia and her latter-day progeny must balance other concerns. As the book *Star Wars: The New Myth* puts it, "the female must become the warrior, yet remain a mother figure, be a comforter and an aggressor, and utilize them concurrently in her exploits."[30] In *A New Hope*, no sooner does Leia help blast her way out of the Death Star than she is comforting Luke, almost in a motherly way, when he mourns Ben Kenobi's death. She becomes the comforter again just before Luke goes off to attack the Death Star. In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Leia and her companions fight their way out of Cloud City, she rescues Luke, then she leaves the *Falcon*'s cockpit to go comfort him. *Return of the Jedi* shows her again as a battle-hardened warrior, but she is still there for Luke in the moments before he leaves to confront Darth Vader and is there for Han when he is brought out of carbon freeze. Some of the other women warriors of the 1970s and 1980s also had

familial concerns. Ellen Ripley briefly flirts with a familial arrangement in *Aliens* with young Newt and Sarah Connor of the first two *Terminator* films raises a son.

Unlike the grieving widow Boadicea or the modest Joan of Arc, Leia allows romance into her life. Initially she does so reluctantly, because like her forebears she puts the job at hand first. But as a modern heroine, she is permitted to explore other aspects of her life, including romantic love. Other modern heroines like Xena, Wonder Woman, and Buffy have had their love affairs. Leia is fortunate in that she is able to integrate her love for Han into her life instead of having her romance endlessly interfere with her mission and vice versa, which seems to be a recurring theme for other modern women warriors. Many latter day heroines are faced with fears of commitment, falling for the wrong man, and finding difficulty balancing personal desires with "career." This perhaps reflects real-life contemporary concerns among young women.

A fascinating and unique aspect of Leia's character as a warrior is that she combines what was best about this archetype in the past with a modern understanding of women's roles in society. Yet unlike her modern or ancient sisters, Leia is allowed to find personal fulfillment and indeed live happily ever after.

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Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know:
The Case for Anakin Skywalker as a Byronic Hero

by Reihla

"'Twere long to tell, and sad to trace,
Each step from splendor to disgrace;
Enough—no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yes! Self-abasement paved the way
To villain-bonds and despot sway."[1]

Few other topics in *Star Wars* culture spark as much debate as the role of Anakin Skywalker in the saga.

As an innocent, idealistic child, Anakin overcame slavery to play a key role in saving the planet Naboo from the Trade Federation. From there he grew to become a moodier, but still heroic, young Jedi apprentice. Despite a rebellious and impulsive nature, Anakin embraces his Jedi goals with fervor and becomes a larger-than-life hero during the Clone Wars. Nevertheless, Anakin remains a slave of his own human nature, and ultimately makes choices that result in his tragic fall from grace.

Anakin's life story conjures up a complex range of emotions and sentiments. He was at different times loved and reviled, leaving some to label him as either hero or villain. I believe neither label is a good fit. True heroes are role models. They give us examples to follow. True to Byron's determination not to write role models, Anakin serves as more of a warning than an example. Very real and human flaws plague him. He makes mistakes that cost him dearly. In that regard he is someone we can identify with. He shows us the darker side of human nature and gives us a reason to avoid those aspects of our own nature.

In this paper I hope to explore each of the characteristics of the Byronic hero and show how Anakin Skywalker/Darth Vader measures up, both as an individual and as an ideal. Almost every definition of the Byronic hero contains some version of the following criteria:

– Is supernaturally gifted, possesses great talent and great ego
– Is an exile, isolated from society
– Is rebellious, defies authority
– Lacks respect for rank and privilege
– Dislikes society, government or social institutions
– Is highly passionate and moody
– Hides something from the past
– Is ultimately self-destructive

Let's begin our comparison with Anakin Skywalker as he is when we first meet him in *The Phantom Menace*. As a boy Anakin is definitely a child of nature in terms of his personality. Peter Thorslev, a Byronic scholar, describes such a child as "naïve, unsophisticated, impulsive, aggressive."[2] In addition, Anakin is supernaturally gifted. We are told that at the tender age of nine he flies podracers – something normal humans do not possess the skills to do. When we do actually see him fly, we are told that his abilities leave even the Jedi in awe. He is also a gifted mechanic, as he tells Padmé Naberrie, "I can fix anything!"[3] We see the skill demonstrated in the protocol droid he has built, as well as in the pod he manages to finish in time for the Boonta Eve race.

In addition to his extraordinary abilities, we see in Anakin an especially positive outlook. He is fond of using his gifts to help others. Early in the story we are told he is "engaged in building a protocol droid to help his mom."[4] Then, when Qui-Gon Jinn and his company are stranded, needing parts for their ship, he insists, "We have to help them." In the novelization, we even see him giving credits to an old pallie vendor in Mos Espa so she can buy a cooling unit to help her tolerate the desert heat.[5] It is precisely this desire to help others that most clearly displays Anakin's passionate nature at this point in his life. From his words and deeds, we see that he knows slavery is a bad thing, that people have a responsibility to help each other, and that cheating is wrong.

In terms of being exiled, not only is Anakin a slave, thus isolated from free society, he is also relegated to the Outer Rim world of Tatooine, a planet very much cut off from the goings on in the heart of the galaxy. Though he doesn't express an open dislike for the galactic government, he most likely shares his mother's views that the Republic and its laws might as well not exist for all the good they do those who live in the Outer Rim.

A rebellious nature and disrespect for authority is something we don't see at this point in Anakin's life. He works hard for his master, Watto, accepting his lot as a slave with stoicism beyond his years. Likewise he shows great respect for his mother. Although he loves podracing, when his mother asks him to stop he promises that he will.

One of the first hints of approaching darkness in Anakin's character is seen when he becomes unreasonably angry at the thought that he might never see Padmé again once she leaves Tatooine. With very little provocation, he jumps into a fight with a young Rodian boy. "Anakin was hitting him as hard and fast as he could, not thinking about anything but how angry he was, not even aware that the source of his anger had nothing to do with his victim and everything to do with losing Padmé."[6] In addition to anger, we see fear. Though the young Anakin convinces himself he isn't afraid of anything, there is one thing that gives him pause, "He might not ever be afraid for himself, but he was sometimes very afraid for his mother."[7]

It is in *Attack of the Clones* that we begin to see more of the darker Byronic characteristics emerge in Anakin. As a young Jedi Padawan, it is his quest for knighthood that gives Anakin a tie to Byron's first heroic character, Childe Harold. The term "childe" was used to designate an eldest son and it was a title that son often kept until he achieved knighthood.[8] Both Anakin and Harold were cynical, suffering and guilt-ridden. Yet a contrast is found in that Harold seemed to begin with these miens and lose them over time, whereas Anakin began without them only to take them on as time went by.

As a young Jedi Anakin remains supernaturally gifted, displaying an affinity for the Force that more seasoned Knights envy. Unfortunately, along with his skill comes a generous measure of pride and a great ego. He tells Padmé that although Obi-Wan is a great mentor, "in some ways – in a lot of ways – I'm ahead of him." He takes his confidence a bit further, allowing us to see his rebelliousness and growing disrespect for his master. In Padmé's apartment he readily challenges Obi-Wan's authority by announcing they will seek the identity of Padmé's would-be assassin. Then later, in the garage of the homestead on Tatooine, he insists Obi-Wan is "just jealous of me…he knows that I'm already more powerful than he is."[9]

Even so, this pride is not necessarily a bad thing. Thorslev also writes "there is always something of rebellious individualism, of pride, of *hubris*, about heroes."[10] Anakin certainly doesn't lack for pride in his abilities, and he makes that clear when his master tells him, "If you'd spend as much time working

on your lightsaber skills as you do on your wit, young Padawan, you would rival Master Yoda!" to which Anakin replies, "I thought I already did."[11]

Though little is said in Romantic era literature about physical appearance as a trait of the Byronic hero, it is worthy of note that the tendency was to make them dashing, brave, and handsome. One particularly beautiful description of the Byronic hero says he "has the appearance, the air of the fallen angel."[12] Indeed, Anakin Skywalker is physically attractive. One other item of his appearance stands out possibly more than his good looks to point him toward the Byronic. As Atara Stein points out "the contemporary Byronic hero is almost always dressed in black."[13] Once Anakin becomes a Jedi we never see him again without his trademark black overtunic or cloak.

One of the hallmarks of a Byronic hero – the tendency towards self-destructive acts – is only hinted at in this second installment in the *Star Wars* saga. The first time we see it is during the speeder chase through Coruscant. Obi-Wan chastises his Padawan for his recklessness, commenting that Anakin almost got them killed. Anakin is unconcerned and immediately proceeds to jump out of the speeder, falling hundreds of stories through the Coruscant traffic lanes until he manages to latch on to a passing vehicle. The same recklessness, with little thought for the preservation of his own life and limb, is evident at the end of Episode II when he ignores his master's warning and rushes in to confront Count Dooku on his own. He pays a hefty price in this instance with the loss of his arm.

At this stage, the young Jedi Anakin's dislike of government isn't readily apparent. He defends both Senator Amidala and Supreme Chancellor Palpatine to his master. It isn't until his conversation with Padmé at the picnic on Naboo that we truly begin to see his disillusionment with the Republic and its leadership. Initially he is teasing Padmé, but she stumbles on the truth when she asks him, "You really don't like politicians, do you?" and Anakin replies, "I like two or three."

Their conversation continues and Anakin admits that he doesn't think the galactic system of government works. Though he insists he was teasing when he alluded to a dictatorship, there is an undercurrent in the air that lets us know he wasn't being as flippant as he would like Padmé to believe. Despite this growing cynicism towards the Republic Anakin continues to do his duty. Stein describes the behavior as Byronic when she says "He may well have a callous contempt for the people he serves, but he serves them, nonetheless."[14]

That isn't to say his disillusionment doesn't have an effect because clearly it does. In Anakin's case his feelings are tied directly to the creation of his own moral code. First, with his open disregard of the Jedi mandate in Padmé's apartment, then later when he disregards orders so that he can go and rescue his mother, and finally when he loses control and kills the Tuskens on Tatooine. None of these things is usual Jedi behavior, but it is likely that Anakin's negative feelings towards the system contribute to his repeated violation of the Jedi tenets he was raised to obey.

Byronic heroes are said to have highly passionate natures. Nothing better illustrates Anakin's own passionate nature than his love for Padmé Amidala. It is very much a force beyond his control. In *Attack of the Clones* Anakin insists, "You're asking me to be rational. That is something I know I cannot do."[15] Though the canon universe never states it outright, we are led to believe that Anakin loves Padmé so much he would have resigned the Jedi Order just to be with her. Nevertheless, Padmé is adamant that they must set aside their love so they can both fulfill their obligations to the systems they serve. She tells Anakin, "We live in a real world. Come back to it." In that sense, Anakin and Padmé are very much like another traditional Byronic hero and his lady love. As Atara Stein describes Emily Bronte's Heathcliff

and Catherine – "They are larger than life; their love cannot endure in a real world where…social considerations of necessity must preempt romantic love."[16]

In Byron's works we see passions of this sort as typical. The Venetian in *The Giaour*, Conrad in *The Corsaire*, and Lara in the work of the same name are all typical Byronic heroes in that they are passionate and steadfast in their love of one woman. In these cases, as in Anakin's, passionate feelings ultimately lead to the keeping of secrets. Although marriage and attachment are forbidden to the Jedi, Anakin manages to convince Padmé that their love must survive. The two finally marry in a secret ceremony on Naboo. Of course, Anakin does not disclose this new bond to his master or to the Jedi Order. With that deliberate act of subterfuge, Anakin solidifies his journey into darkness and deception.

The Giaour offers us another similarity to Anakin. Byron himself describes the Venetian as seeking revenge for the death of his lover, a female slave.[17] When Anakin's mother is killed by a band of Tusken raiders, he exacts vengeance by killing the entire Tusken village. Words penned by Byron could just as easily be used to describe his actions: "And I, alas! Too late to save! Yet all I then could give, I gave, 'twas some relief, our foe a grave. His death sits lightly; but her fate has made me – what thou well may'st hate."[18] In the end both Anakin and the Venetian achieve their goal – atonement for a wrongful death – but both are forever changed by the act. In Anakin's case such a massacre is clearly not heroic. Even so, we can sympathize with such dark desire for retribution. It is our sympathy which disguises the horror of the act itself and leaves us believing Anakin is still worthy of the hero moniker.

Though little is known at this point of Episode III, there is one aspect revealed by the movie trailer that bears inclusion here. Faust, a romantic precursor to the Byronic Hero, represented the thirst for infinite knowledge. It is commonly known that Anakin felt responsible for his mother's death. He believes he should have been there to prevent it and even goes so far as to tell Padmé that someday he will find the means to "stop people from dying." In the recently released theatrical trailer we see Anakin questioning Palpatine about the secret to sustaining life in the face of death, surely representative of a quest for knowledge of the infinite. Palpatine tells him he cannot learn this secret from a Jedi and we, the audience, are given our first real glimpse into Anakin's darker future.

Once Anakin surrenders to darkness and becomes Darth Vader, some argue that he becomes a true villain. I find that label difficult to accept because his motives are seldom, if ever, self-serving. Alexander Walsh describes well why one might believe Vader doesn't fall into the traditional villain category: "[h]e acts with deep feeling, and his intentions are 'good,' though fierce and mistaken."[19] Although we find fault with Vader's methods we still find ourselves being convinced that he believes he is doing the right thing.

As a Dark Lord of the Sith, Vader is fearsome and solitary. His presence inspires fear in the men around him. Lucas describes it thus, "The cloud of evil which clung tight about this particular one was intense enough to cause hardened Imperial troops to back away."[20]

Anne Radcliffe, an author thought to have influenced Byron, describes a character very similar to Vader in *The Italian*. "Among his associates no one loved him, many disliked him, and more feared him. His figure was striking, but not so from grace; it was tall, and though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth, and as he stalked along, wrapped in the black garments of his order, there was something terrible in its air; something almost superhuman…His was not the melancholy of a sensible and wounded heart, but apparently that of a gloomy and ferocious disposition."[21]

Vader is at once repulsive and attractive. Along with his dark cruelty he carries equal parts of power and mystery. *The Giaour* is likewise described in terms that are both lovely and dark: "His floating robe around him folding…with dread beheld, with gloom beholding." And later in the same stanza, "If ever evil angel bore, the form of mortal, such he wore: By all my hope of sins forgiven, such looks are not of earth or heaven."[22] Once again, we see the trademark black garments. In fact, black is so much a part of Vader's appearance that one could almost say he becomes the color itself.

In addition to a powerful physical presence, we are shown that Vader has retained both Anakin's supernatural powers and his ego. In a moment of rare introspection we are privy to Vader's thoughts, "while he would have preferred the company of equals, he had to admit reluctantly that at this point, he *had* no equals."[23] Alongside the obvious arrogance it is surprising to see a hint of loneliness in that statement. It gives us a rare glimpse into the isolation Vader experiences by virtue of his position and his power. It makes us almost sympathetic to him.

Along with his emotional isolation, it is easiest to show Darth Vader's exile in a physical sense – his suit makes normal interaction with people around him impossible. Though he is surrounded by his officers at all times, he is very much set apart from them in terms of normal human interaction. In fact, in the novelization of *Return of the Jedi* Vader's own thoughts about his mask are very telling. He mentally describes it as "his voice, and his breath, and his invisibility – his shield against all human contact."[24]

Although Vader serves the Empire, we are given the impression that he does so because it is the will of his master. His disdain for Imperial officers is clearly demonstrated when he tells them that their ultimate weapon is "still insignificant when set against the Force."[25] When General Tagge argues against that viewpoint, Vader thinks nothing of giving the man a small taste of Sith power by using the Force to constrict his windpipe. While that may not display an actual dislike for the Empire, it definitely indicates defiance, rebelliousness and a lack of respect for others who serve it. The fact that Tagge is a General doesn't faze Vader in the slightest, especially when he feels called upon to defend his own beliefs.

Though he appears to have more success than Anakin at actually controlling his passions…In the realest sense, Vader is the dark byproduct of Anakin Skywalker's passionate nature.

It is this very defense of himself and his values that show Vader as equally passionate as Anakin. We shouldn't be surprised, however, that Darth Vader gives off a more dispassionate air. Though he appears to have more success than Anakin at actually controlling his passions, we must remind ourselves that the very nature of the Dark Side of the Force resides in allowing one's passionate feelings – in Vader's case, anger, fear, hate – to have free reign. In the realest sense, Vader is the dark byproduct of Anakin Skywalker's passionate nature.

Oddly enough, despite his obvious power over officers of the Empire, Vader prefers not to take on the leadership role. Manfred, one of Byron's heroes, also eschews the leadership role for himself. He seems to feel as if it is almost beneath him. "I could not tame my nature down; for he must serve who fain would sway; and soothe, and sue, and watch all the time, and pry into all place, and be a living Lie, who would become a mighty thing among the mean – and such the mass are; I disdained to mingle with a herd, though to be a leader – and of wolves. The lion is alone, and so am I."[26] We are never quite certain why Vader has never sought a more powerful position within the Empire, but this theory – that he prefers to remain solitary and unaccountable to that system – probably works as well as any.

In Atara Stein's work the Byronic hero is described as "an agent of oppressive…authority, who yet draws the admiration of his audience due to his awesome abilities. He then becomes transformed into an agent of revolt against the institutions that created or employed him."[27] We see that twice in Anakin's life, both in his time as a Jedi Padawan – when he turns to the Dark Side and takes part in the destruction of the Jedi Order – and again as Darth Vader – when, in one final impulsive act, he saves his son by destroying the very master he left the Jedi to serve.

It is this final valiant gesture of self-destruction and sacrifice that succeeds in destroying Darth Vader forever, thus returning Anakin Skywalker to the status of hero. It is a victory made tragic when we realize that he has returned to humanity only to die of his injuries moments later. One of the most touching scenes in the original trilogy takes place once Vader has cast aside his dark master and asks Luke to help him remove his mask. Knowing that his death is certain, he seeks that last moment of human contact, that last exchange of words and glances with his son.

Although tragic, we seem to realize that Vader could have come to no other end. Stein describes this Byronic phenomenon by pointing out that such heroes are destined to remain isolated from society: "he cannot be reintegrated into society, even if he has benefited that society with his heroic actions; he must be rehumanized, then exiled or destroyed."[28] In that sense, Anakin Skywalker comes full circle. In my mind, it is the entirety of the journey – from innocent child to evil Sith Lord to rehumanized champion – which solidifies Anakin Skywalker as a Byronic hero.

Note: the author reserves the right to add additional content to this paper at some future time pending the release of Episode III: The Revenge of the Sith.

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Recommendation
Investigating Inspiration

Website: *Star Wars* Origins
URL: www.jitterbug.com/origins
Owner: Kristen Brennan

Reviewed by ami-padme.

How did George Lucas create *Star Wars*?

The question is curious: on the one hand, breaking down his creative process into explainable pieces seems almost impossible – on the other hand, most *Star Wars* fans can easily run through a list of obvious influences on the saga. Joseph Campbell. *Flash Gordon*. *Lord of the Rings*. Akira Kurosawa.

That nexus – between unknowable thought processes, individual creativity, and literary inspiration – is the focus of the website *Star Wars* Orgins (www.jitterbug.com/origins). Created and maintained by Kristen Brennan, it provides an in-depth look at the various influences George Lucas drew upon in creating the *Star Wars* story.

Starting with the *Flash Gordon* serials Lucas loved, *Star Wars* Origins presents detailed looks at each saga source. The site goes beyond explaining how Lucas used the material in his writing, beyond the "subtle lessons" from it that *Star Wars* incorporates, and provides a study of the background to these materials – how they came to be, and how they influenced popular culture, entertainment, and modern mythology. Each page also features comparison pictures to provide visual support. Look at the original Cloud City from the Gordon series, see the evil robots from the film *Metropolis* (that led to the much more benign C-3PO), and see how the holographic communications from the movie *Forbidden Planet* resemble Princess Leia's plea to Obi-Wan in *A New Hope*. Several pages include tables for quick and easy comparisons, such as how *Star Wars* fulfills the Campbellian ideal of storytelling or how Lucas followed Frank Herbert's footsteps as laid down in the science-fiction classic, *Dune*.

Having compiled all of this information, Ms. Brennan then delineates the lessons in writing and storytelling she's learned from her research into Lucas' work, such as checking one's ego before putting pen to paper, remembering that entertaining the audience is at least 90 percent of the writer's job, and being unafraid to borrow from great works of the past.

The website offers an enjoyable way to explore the saga – its layout is easy to navigate, the pictures are used to good effect, and Ms. Brennan writing is informative and personable. I recommend it to *Star Wars* fans looking to dig a little deeper into its origins. It's a good read for fans of the saga, of Lucas, and of science-fiction/fantasy/mythology in general.

Discovering *Star Wars*

dark_heavens

The first thing I remember about *Star Wars* is it being shown on television a lot – this would have been when I was young, maybe 11 or so. My sister and brother showed a lot of interest in the films and would always watch them when they came on, so that started getting me interested. Then I remember seeing the actual movies themselves lying around the house, probably in my dad's room. I learned that my dad was a massive *Star Wars* fan and had been since the movies came out, so that piqued my interest a little more. I remember watching the movies here and there on TV, but I actually got into them when I saw them on tape. *Empire Strikes Back* was my favorite of the films from the first time I saw it; I liked that it was dark and that it didn't end on a happy note. I also loved Luke Skywalker – he was, and still is, my favorite character. When the Original Trilogy was re-released in theaters it made a strong impression on me. Everyone in my family was excited about it so, of course, that got me excited too. I saw *A New Hope* in a stadium theater and it was awesome. There were so many people there and they were so into the movie. So you could say that even though I was always aware of the saga, that was when I officially discovered *Star Wars*.

Issue 5

May 2005

What if Dreams Came True?

by rhonderoo

What if dreams came true? And you can be who you wanted to be, and you could do what you wanted to do, and you could help who you wanted to help? What if dreams came true, and the world opened up, and you were never, ever afraid? What if dreams came true? But dreams do come true, don't they?

~ Anakin Skywalker

The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung describes dreams as "the personalized myth, myth the personalized dream."[1] In George Lucas' saga, the archetypal tragic hero, Anakin Skywalker, suffers from premonitions at an early age, causing him to make many important decisions that will affect not only him but the entire galaxy. In *The Phantom Menace* we learn that Anakin has had a dream that he grew up to become a Jedi and came back to free the slaves. We haven't seen this culminate to fruition yet in the prequels, but it's evident that the dream had significance to Anakin's place in the universe in the galaxy far, far away. Many fans of the saga hypothesize that this comes when he frees the galaxy from the rule of Palpatine in *Return of the Jedi*. In the Episode I novelization by Terry Brooks, Anakin also speaks of a dream in which Padmé will lead troops into battle. This is later brought about by her re-taking of the capital of Theed with the Jedi's help and by the destruction of the Trade Federation ship by Anakin.

Later, in *Attack of the Clones*, a more mature Anakin has a dream that his mother is in pain. We see this vague portent come true as Anakin is lured back to his home planet of Tatooine by the incessant nightmares of his mother, Shmi Skywalker, being in danger and suffering. From what we've seen of the new movie from official sources and spoilers, in *Revenge of the Sith* another dream plays a major part in Anakin's destiny, that of the death of his beloved wife Padmé in the birth of their child. After the events on Tatooine that led to his mother's fate, Anakin feels he must do something to change Padmé's destiny and sets about trying to find a way to save her. This causes him to make a decision that will cause the very thing he is trying most to deter. In a Faustian-like move, Anakin makes a deal with "the devil," in this case with a Sith Lord, to stop the events of his dream from happening. This brings about with dire consequences for not only himself, but for the Jedi and the galaxy as a whole. In a Faustian like move, Anakin makes a deal with "the devil," in this case with a Sith Lord, to stop the events of his dream from happening.

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Mythology has always used the concept of dreams and premonitions as something attributed to those with special powers. In the *Star Wars* universe Jedi Knights draw their power from the Force. The Force can lend extrasensory powers and give insight into the future, the past, or the thoughts of others. It is these glimpses into the future that cause the most confusion, heartache, and pain. Yoda tells Luke that the future is always in motion, but, like his father, Luke finds it hard to give his destiny or the destiny of those that he loves over to fate. In Anakin's case, due to his past experiences, he views his nightmares as literal premonitions instead of the metaphoric dreams that Yoda speaks of, and therefore fails on a much larger scale than his son.

In our universe, dreams are our way of seeing our life from the outside looking in. One could say everything we plan or do comes from a dream or vision of some kind, maybe not the psychic, ethereal kind, but most certainly the ability to see something before we make it tangible or real. Our dreams, vision, and imagination make up part of who we are. The imagination is a wonderful thing, but in the instance of nightmares or unsettling visions, it can make our vision into what feels like a terrible reality. This is the case with the tragic hero and central character of the saga, Anakin Skywalker. In certain instances, he dreams of those he loves being in peril, and can't give control of the situation over to the Force.

Anakin has trouble separating his prophetic dreams from reality throughout his life. He leans on them as a guide, when perhaps he should take more of Yoda's advice and wait and see what will happen. Anakin Skywalker has never been someone to wait and see, and therein lies the heart of the problem: Anakin is a doer. Even in his later years as Darth Vader, Anakin cannot sit and wait for the answer to come to him; he must go out and find it. He cannot trust someone else to take care of his needs, as it is his nature to do for his own self, to always find a way. His early formative years as a slave instill a survival instinct in him that forms him into what he is later in life.

Anakin's mistake is that in trying to interpret his dreams, he is taking each detail as literal and not listening to the will of the Force. Even in our own universe, Freud states that we should not expect an interpretation of our dreams to fall like manna from the sky.[2] The interpretation of dreams is not always accomplished at a single sitting. When a chain of associations have been followed with no clear picture, it is inevitable that nothing more can be learned from the dream at that point. Based on one previous experience, Anakin decides to take Padmé's fate into his own hands and try to stop the dream from happening. Knowing what we know, we in the audience can safely say it might be the Force's way of warning Anakin of what his future actions will be if he chooses the dark side, but in context of the story Anakin sees it as the Force once again warning him of something that will happen if he doesn't stop it himself.

Anakin has been told or is lead to believe in some way that the Jedi don't have nightmares. Everything is a view into the events of the past, present or future, when it's possible that they are, in fact, just dreams. Part of the problem with the Jedi's handling of Anakin is that they can't understand the experiences he has had as a normal sentient being in the galaxy. He has had dreams before, but they were never made out to be anything other than dreams, with perhaps some special insight. Shmi Skywalker seemed to realize that Anakin had the power to see certain things, but never dwelled on this fact with Anakin. Little Annie seemed to be able to take his dreams in stride as a child and not lend so much credit to them as a guide for any certain path. He told Qui-Gon of his dream, but seemed to view it as something no bigger than it actually was.

One could argue that in the scheme of things in the galaxy far, far away, maybe Anakin was destined to live out his life on Tatooine listening to the Force via his dreams and interpreting them as the Force saw fit. Perhaps it has always spoken to him through dreams for a reason, and like Yoda, he is supposed to divine his purpose through these. According to Jung, even in our own reality, we can think all of our lives that we are following our own purpose, and may never discover that we are, for the most part, "supernumeraries on the stage of the world theater."[3] There are factors which, although we do not know of them, nevertheless influence our lives, the more so if they are unconscious.

Campbell writes, "The unconscious sends all sorts of vapors, odd beings, terrors, and deluding messages up into the mind – whether in dream, broad daylight, or insanity…"[4] Dreams show how things are quirked by the troubles of the dreamer, whereas myths show the problems and solutions are directly

valid for all mankind. In mythology, how a dream is interpreted is the part of the journey a hero must make. Anakin must cross the rivers of hell to his own purgatory caused by his dreams in *Revenge of the Sith*. His life from there seems to be one long purgatory until his redemption in *Return of the Jedi*.

Even into his life as Darth Vader, Anakin seems to rely heavily on his feelings and intuition, something he attributes to his gifts in the Force. Luckily for his son and the galaxy at the end, it is what the Force is telling him through his own conscious that brings about his decision to end the horror and subjugation and do away with Palpatine. At the end, he finally realized it is what he does with this information that counts, and this is the lesson on choices that George Lucas has been trying to teach each of us with his story.

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New Hopes: Mothers in the *Star Wars* Saga

by Sarah

The relationship between fathers and sons has always been a big part of the *Star Wars* saga. After all, it is difficult to find anyone who doesn't remember the first time they learned that Darth Vader was Luke Skywalker's father. But after being introduced to new characters from the prequel trilogy, and meeting old characters in their younger days, it is proved that mothers play a big part in the *Star Wars* saga as well. After all, without Padmé Amidala, the mysterious (until *The Phantom Menace*) mother of Luke and Leia, there would be very little of the saga to be watching...

"The world-generating spirit of the father passes into the manifold of earthly experience through a transforming medium – the mother of the world," writes Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.[1] We have met two natural mothers in the saga so far, Padmé Amidala and Shmi Skywalker. (In the deleted scenes of *Attack of the Clones*, we also meet Padmé's own mother, and her sister who has children of her own). Luke has another mother figure in his Aunt Beru, and Leia also mothers him in *A New Hope* as he grieves for Obi-Wan. But the first we meet in the saga, when it is viewed in order, is Shmi, Anakin's mother.

Shmi Skywalker was kidnapped by pirates as a young girl, and became a slave on Tatooine. She gave birth to Anakin there, and as she tells Qui-Gon many years later, there was no father. Shmi's story has ties with Christianity – she gives birth to a messiah, who she gives up, but later it is her and not her son who is crucified. Lucas and the makers of *Star Wars* came under fire for including a virgin birth as part of *The Phantom Menace*'s storyline, but it adds to the mythology – countless myths and legends have begun with a hero with no father. (Campbell relates a few of them in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Chapter II, Part 4, *Folk Stories of Virgin Motherhood*.) An argument could be made that Anakin's lack of a father is part of what leads him to seek out father substitutes: Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, and lastly Palpatine.

Following Anakin's journey along, after he leaves his mother he becomes closer to Padmé, who he still believes is just a handmaiden. In the junior novel, Queen Amidala's Journal, Padmé writes, "For a moment, Shmi and I locked eyes. Something passed between us. As if she was giving her son to me."[2] Padmé at first is a mother figure to Anakin, before his feelings for her grow into lust. She comforts him after they leave Tatooine, the same way Leia will later comfort Luke. Their relationship is quiet and innocent – after all, they are only ten and fourteen – until they meet again as young adults and their feelings towards each other change. Padmé still treats him like a child – she is surprised at how much he's grown, especially when he gives her advice like "Sometimes we must put away our pride and do what is expected of us." And Anakin is seemingly hurt by her refusal to acknowledge his newfound maturity –

"When you say Annie, it's like I'm still a little boy. And I'm not."

Padmé paused and looked him over, head to toe, nodding as she took the sight of him in completely. He could see sincerity on her face as she nodded her agreement, and her tone, too, became one of more respect. "I'm sorry, Anakin. It's impossible to deny you've...that you've grown up."[3]

Throughout *Attack of the Clones*, Anakin remains focused on the two most important women in his life: Shmi and Padmé. He is too late to save one, which only increases his desire to save the other. When Padmé is separated from him during the battle of Geonosis, he is willing to risk expulsion from the Jedi

Order to save her. Perhaps with his mother now gone, she embodies both roles: mother and lover. It is also probably not a coincidence on the part of the casting team for the movies that Padmé and Shmi look so alike – in fact, Shmi looks not entirely unlike an aged Padmé. In *The Phantom Menace*, she looks like the traditional mother figure – the elementary character of the feminine, who "tends to be associated with earth colors and vegetation imagery."[4] Padmé is often, especially in *Attack of the Clones*, wearing earth colors.

After Padmé's death, the galaxy is plunged into darkness…However, there is hope in the form of [her] children.

Padmé is what keeps Anakin sane as the Clone Wars drag on. Despite being warned against possessiveness, Anakin loves her to the point that he'd do anything to avoid ever losing her. This is obvious from just the ending of *Attack of the Clones*, and about to be expanded on in *Revenge of the Sith*. Anakin's love for her leads into tragedy, tragedy for the entire galaxy as well as just for him. Campbell writes of the Goddess, one who has the features of the Universal Mother: "She is also the death of everything that dies. The whole round of existence is accomplished through her sway, from birth, through adolescence, maturity, and senescence, to the grave."[5] After Padmé's death, the galaxy is plunged into darkness. Naboo, her planet, is not seen again, the Empire employs few women, and all the colour has gone out of the galaxy. However, there is hope in the form of Padmé's children

As any *Star Wars* fan knows, Padmé Amidala is the mother of Luke and Leia. In the original trilogy she is mentioned only once in *Return of the Jedi*, during Luke and Leia's conversation. "She was very beautiful," says Leia, who has very vague memories of her mother that Luke does not, "kind, but sad." She is never mentioned by Luke in *A New Hope*, although he speaks about his father often. Likewise Leia never before now mentions a mother, only the man she previously thought was her father. Fathers definitely seem to dominate Episodes Four and Five. It is probable that Luke felt like his aunt was a mother to him, and never wanted another mother figure in his life. After she is gone, he has Leia. We still don't know who is the oldest twin, but it seems likely it is her, as she treats Luke much in the way an older sister would treat her brother. (The twins themselves, though, almost certainly don't know who was born first, and probably never will).

Padmé has been called the most important woman in the saga – certainly, without her there would be no Luke, and thus Anakin remains Vader. Not only is Luke Anakin's son, he is Padmé's son as well – he is the way their love survives. It could almost be the case that Padmé redeems her husband, through her son, while Leia carries on her work in the politics of the galaxy. Padmé is never mentioned by name in the original trilogy, but her legacy lives on.

As has been mentioned, Luke's other mother figure is his Aunt Beru. She is more sympathetic to him than his uncle is, taking his side during any arguments. In fact, she is not unlike Shmi in the prequel trilogy – she also meets a cruel end, being killed by stormtroopers along with her husband. However, unlike Anakin's avenging of his mother's death, Luke is not motivated to murder – instead he asks that he go with Ben Kenobi to Alderaan. His aunt and uncle are never mentioned again – admittedly Luke soon winds up with quite a bit on his mind – but the last chapter of the prequel trilogy will hopefully show that it was them, especially Beru, who gave Luke another chance at life, and a family to replace the one he couldn't remember. Anakin had no such thing – he did have a family, but was separated from her, and found no mother-replacement in the Jedi Order. The Jedi rules are specifically designed to avoid families, and Anakin pays the price. Eventually, so do the rest of the Jedi.

Both parental figures are important to the saga – *family* is important to the saga, and one of the major themes. The fact that Darth Vader is Luke's father is obviously of great importance, but the fact that he is Padmé's son no less so – her strength coupled with his is enough to win the day. Shmi is one of the strongest forces for goodness in the whole saga. Anakin's love for her and for Padmé may lead him on his first step towards the dark side, but his son, who is one of the last people in the world now who he could love, brings him back. (A brief spoiler-of-sorts fo*r Revenge of the Sith:* apparently there is a line towards the end which makes deeper the connection between Padmé and Luke, making Luke not the only one who never stopped seeing the good in Anakin.)

And lastly, at the end of the saga, Leia makes clear her feelings for Han Solo. Even for those who have never read the books where she goes on to have twins, the audience may well think that she will grow to have children, and some of them may be force-sensitive, and thus the circle will continue in her.

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Recommendation

Philosophical Force

Title: *Star Wars* And Philosophy: More Powerful Than You Can Imagine
Editors: Kevin S. Decker and Jason T. Eberl
ISBN: 0-8126-9583-6
Publisher: Open Court
Copyright: 2005

Reviewed by lazypadawan.

Open Court's Popular Culture and Philosophy Series has produced titles like *Harry Potter and Philosophy: If Aristotle Ran Hogwarts, Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling In Sunnyvale*, and *The Simpsons and Philosophy: The D'oh of Homer*. The publishers have also explored *The Matrix* (in two volumes, no less), *Lord of the Rings*, *Seinfeld*, and *The Sopranos*. Next they plan on tackling superheroes and hip-hop, among other phenomena.

With the sixth and final *Star Wars* film upon us, Open Court gives the saga the philosophical treatment. The book is a collection of essays written by philosophers, professors, and others examining the questions raised by the films, such as could droids be considered "people"? Why do Jedi lie while Sith tell the truth? Is Yoda a classical Stoic? Was Anakin always meant to fall to the dark side? Other essays use the films to illustrate and discuss various philosophical perspectives. Everything from Taoism to politics to cloning to religion is discussed and the philosophers cited include Hegel, Aristotle, Saint Augustine, and Hume, among others. The book is split into four parts: "May the Force Be With You: The Philosophical Messages of '*Star Wars*,'" "Try Not – Do Or Do Not: Ethics In A Galaxy Far, Far Away," "Don't Call Me A Mindless Philosopher!: The Alien Technologies and Metaphysics of The Force," and "There's Always A Bigger Fish: Truth, Faith, and A Galactic Society."

The best thing about the book is that all of the essays are thought-provoking and intelligently-written, even if not every topic will be of interest to every person and even if you find yourself disagreeing with the philosophical slant or with their perception of the films. Many of the authors are clearly fans of the series and are sufficiently knowledgeable about the story. My favorite essays were "The Force Is With Us: Hegel's Philosophy of Spirit Strikes Back At The Empire," mostly for its sympathetic view of Anakin and its admiration for the saga as a whole, "By Any Means Necessary: Tyranny, Democracy, Republic, and Empire," "A Certain Point of View: Lying Jedi, Honest Sith, and the Viewers Who Love Them" for its interesting take on that issue, and "You Cannot Escape Your Destiny (Or Can You?): Freedom and Predetermination in the Skywalker Family."

Another nice aspect of the book is that the mix of essays covers the whole saga, not just one trilogy over the other. For the most part there isn't any editorializing about the films with the exception of one essay that accuses the saga, by solely examining *The Empire Strikes Back*, of humanizing technology while dehumanizing the human characters. This is strange since the films emphasize over and over that technology has the potential to dehumanize.

The oddest essay is one about environmental ethics. When the author is questioning the ethics of Luke taking out womprats, she's going to have quite a few people rolling their eyes and otherwise ignoring the points of the rest of her essay.

But even so, the essays beat fanboy message board rants any day of the week. The book will please those who have always viewed the saga as more than simple entertainment and perhaps make reading about philosophy a bit easier for those who would otherwise avoid the topic.

Discovering *Star Wars*

AnakinAdvocate

My genesis as a *Star Wars* fan began a few days after *Star Wars*' 1977 debut. Two radio DJs were talking about the new science fiction movie in terms I had seldom heard. This jaded pair was almost giggly about the film, but what got me was the comment, "How about that battle at the end – was that some kind of rumble or what?!" I'm indebted to these anonymous jocks, because from that moment I was hooked and had to see what caused such a reaction.

I was 27, raised on the likes of *Buck Rogers* and *Flash Gordon*. My gold standard of science fiction was *Forbidden Planet*, *War of the Worlds*, and *Star Trek*. It's hard to convey to those too young to remember the pre-modern special effects days just what effect the opening shot of Princess Leia's spaceship and the pursuing Star Destroyer had on people like me. I had been raised on Emperor Ming the Merciless' spaceships suspended by visible strings. *Star Wars* was quite the epiphany for me.

Lucas had me from that moment. And yeah, I thought the "rumble" at the end was incredible, just like the DJs. Since then, I've followed the saga faithfully, raising a new generation of fanatics (my three kids). However, though I know my kids love the saga, I somehow regret that they – having grown up in the post-Episode IV era – never quite experienced the thrill my generation did following those opening credits. What a rush!

Issue 6

June 2005

Not Another Pathetic Life Form: Jar Jar as the Holy Fool

by ami-padme

The first episode of the *Star Wars* film saga, *The Phantom Menace*, is unusual compared to the other chapters of the story because of its façade of innocent joviality. Though the forces of darkness begin their ascent in this film, as the seeds of the falls of Anakin Skywalker, the Jedi Order, and the Galactic Republic are sown, overall the movie reflects a golden age that will not be seen again over the course of the six movies. The audience sees in the characters – both in where they are in their lives, how in they interact with one another – an expression of this happier and simpler time.

Jar Jar Binks is perhaps the most direct personification of the lighter tone found in Episode I. The Gungan outcast who befriends and accompanies the Jedi, Padmé, and Anakin on their adventures is a guileless, clumsy, and somewhat silly creature who becomes swept up in the various events of the movie. He provides much of the film's humor and – along with a nine-year-old Anakin Skywalker – gives it a great deal of its childlike quality.

All of this fits the literary archetype of the Holy Fool. Although no one character will match all the characteristics of any particular archetype, it is easy to see how Jar Jar fits the definition of the Fool, and how his embodiment of this archetype works with and enhances the story of *The Phantom Menace*. Jar Jar's kind, affable, and innocent ways contribute to the classic storytelling of the saga.

What makes a character a Holy Fool? First, one of the most basic characteristics of the archetype is that the character is almost always male, as Jar Jar obviously is.[1] However, the Fool also often has traits that are usually associated with weakness when held by men, and emotional expressiveness is one of them.[2] In literature, many fools and clowns wear masks to "cover up" their emotions, and make it socially acceptable for them to both act and speak out. Jar Jar does not wear a mask, or otherwise attempt to hide himself, but he is very open and expressive, and does receive some measure of consternation from other characters because of it. Jar Jar shows his fear when he feels it, such as when he complains to Qui-Gon Jinn about the dangers of Mos Espa on Tatooine, or when he is reluctant to return to the city of Otoh Gunga. He also never bothers to hide his joy – happily proclaiming, "Wesa going home!" when Queen Amidala decides she's going to return to Naboo. Holy Fools often have exaggerated and honest reactions to what happens to them, and Jar Jar is no exception.

Those exaggerated reactions are related to another one of the Fool's traits – the focus on humor and making others in the story laugh, and on finding ways to entertain them. *A Jungian Approach to Literature* states that, "Fools…represented a reversal of the normal order of things, and, as such, gave the impression of being…irreverent, and humorous."[3] Jar Jar provides the majority of the comic relief in *The Phantom Menace*, whether it is done through his unusual accent and manner of speaking, his clumsy and accident-prone nature, or through his rather excitable personality. While we don't see him tell deliberate jokes, we do see him inadvertently juggle on more than one occasion (his klutziness causes him to struggle to balance and hold onto several items in Watto's shop, as an example), and he makes both Padmé and Anakin smile and laugh while also seeming to amuse Qui-Gon Jinn.

Jar Jar Binks is perhaps the most direct personification of the lighter tone found in Episode I.

This quality often causes the Fool to be confused with the archetype of the Clown, and indeed, the two are similar in their propensity to amuse. The main difference between the two is that the Clown is mostly associated with the common people, while the Fool is connected to people in arenas of power.[4] This can been seen clearly in the Shakespearean tradition, where the Holy Fool is often a member of the royal court, or otherwise is in the employ of the ruling class. Very early on in Episode I, Jar Jar meets two Jedi – the select protectors and guardians of the Republic – and joins them in their many travels. This eventually leads him to Queen Amidala of the Naboo, and other members of her royal court. At the end of the movie, he helps bring Queen Amidala together with Boss Nass, the leader of the Gungans. Jar Jar, like many other Holy Fools, particularly stands out because he is among the powerful, refined, and elite members of the society.

Fools often stand outside the normal social order in one way or another.[5] Jar Jar begins the story as an exile from his home community and continues to be the odd man out amongst the royals and Jedi that he finds himself in the company of. He symbolizes the divide between humans and Gungans on Naboo (along with Padmé), a divide he helps erase through his actions. He is uninvolved and seemingly unaware of the politics and maneuvering that takes place once the traveling party arrives on Coruscant. Fools throughout literature are outsiders in other ways – many were dwarves, mentally challenged, or possessed some other defect. Some of Jar Jar's personality may be a more benign version of this trait. Historically, there was no derision meant in having the Fool possess these defects; acting as a court jester was a way to help such people maintain independence and make a living. Jar Jar is not meant to be derided either, and his simplicity leads him into important and career-establishing roles (as we see later, Jar Jar goes into politics and works with Senator Amidala and Chancellor Palpatine).

In his book, *The Fool and His Scepter*, author William Willeford says this about the way Fools are viewed: "The naïve view [is] that Fools are just silly, [while] the more refined view [is] that Fools show a kind of wisdom."[6] In Episode I, Jar Jar is certainly viewed the former way, most notably by Obi-Wan Kenobi, who refers to the Gungan as a "pathetic lifeform" with some exasperation. However, Qui-Gon Jinn believes that Jar Jar may be helpful, and saves him from the wrath of Boss Nass at the film's beginning, allowing Jar Jar to accompany them on their mission. The Jedi is later proven correct when Queen Amidala takes Jar Jar seriously enough to hinge critical parts of her plan to rescue her planet on Jar Jar's information about the Gungan army. According to the book *Fool and Jesters in Literature, Art, and History*, "The influence of these [Fools] on monarchs…is often underestimated."[7]

However, being around powerful people connects to another typical trait of the Fool that Jar Jar does not possess in *The Phantom Menace*. Often the job of the Fool is to give criticism of other characters, of society, or of the story's events in a way that is incisive and truthful. The Fool's humor and non-serious personality often serve as a cover, protecting him from the anger or retribution such comments would normally engender. This was often seen in Shakespeare's various plays – the Fool was allowed almost unparalleled freedom in his speech, and his honesty often earned him the respect of rulers or monarchs.[8] While Jar Jar occasionally expresses views that are skeptical or critical of the Jedi or the Force – during the journey to Theed with Qui-Gon and Obi-Wan, for example – his function is clearly not focused on providing such commentary on the people or events surrounding him.

This lack of critical commentary makes Jar Jar more akin to a Dummling, a character archetype that is one of the variations on the Holy Fool. The Dummling is a "character who, although often simple-minded, acts with a good heart and is usually rewarded for it."[9] This description certainly seems to fit Jar Jar, who is indeed kind-hearted and has a simplicity about him. He is rewarded at the film's end: first, he is made a general in the Gungan army – clearly a position of honor – as a recognition of his role in bringing the Naboo and the Gungans together to fight the Trade Federation's occupation of their planet;

during the parade after the battle, Jar Jar is treated as a hero by the jubilant crowd. This is similar to a character in the legends of King Arthur, Sir Dagonet, who served as the Holy Fool in that saga. He was knighted as a joke; however, once he appeared in the tournaments, he performed ably and bravely.[10] Jar Jar's commission is not made in jest, however, it has nothing to do with any skills he may or may not have in battle. Despite his fear and awkwardness on the field, Jar Jar acquits himself well in the battle, and in other parts of the movie. Dummlings generally "[do] not so much impart wisdom as foster living with kindness and simplicity."[11]

Jar Jar Binks' function in *The Phantom Menace* is to provide some of the light-hearted and innocent tone that is so important to emphasize in the saga's opening chapter. By taking on the role of the Holy Fool archetype, Jar Jar adds humor and good-natured kindness to a deceptively happy movie.

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Chosen One: the Hero Myth of Anakin Skywalker

by Lady Kenobi

"You refer to the prophecy of the one who will bring balance to the Force.
You believe it's this…boy?"

Within the *Star Wars* saga, there are many heroes. A great many of them go through the kind of Hero's Journey codified and described in Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. However, the one person throughout the six stories that moves through the most complete journey, the most comprehensive story from beginning to ending, is Anakin Skywalker. It is his quest that drives the saga in the end. Taking the structures provided by Joseph Campbell in his book, it is possible to trace many of Anakin's transformations from a "wonder child" to one who, through sacrifices and trials, redeems the world – or in the case of *Star Wars*, the galaxy. Like any individual mythical hero, Anakin will not match Campbell's outline of hero transformations step for step, but he experiences an amazing majority of them, which are as follows: the Childhood of the Human Hero, The Hero as Warrior, The Hero as Lover, The Hero as Tyrant, The Hero as World Redeemer, and finally the Departure of the Hero. We shall begin at the beginning, with his birth.

Qui-Gon Jinn, the great Jedi Master who senses and discovers the child Anakin, at one point asks his mother Shmi about the boy's origins. He does this because midi-chlorians, which can possibly determine the "Force sensitivity," or ability to easily use the invisible power that the Jedi knights use, are hereditary. The more midi-chlorians, the higher the Force sensitivity. When he asks who Anakin's father is, Shmi answers, after a difficult and guarded pause, "There is no father. I carried him, I gave birth to him. I raised him. I can't tell you any more than that."(Brooks, 145) After testing Anakin's blood to find out he has the highest midi-chlorian count of any Jedi known, Qui-Gon theorizes that the midi-chlorians may have conceived him somehow, in a report to the central Jedi Council. While not entirely clear yet, this situation implies a form of a miraculous conception or birth, something common to many hero stories. The high midi-chlorian count also exemplifies Anakin's inherently great power overall. However, his social status when Qui-Gon first meets him is not great for he is a slave. In addition, he is a slave on twin-sunned Tatooine, on the farthest reaches of the Outer Rim. His mother was a slave, now he is one also, prevented from escape by penalty of death. However, even he himself does not imagine this situation to last long. He dreams of becoming a pilot and leaving dusty Tatooine, but he also plans on coming back to free *all* the slaves. This alone could earn him hero status, but his future lies upon a different path.

Even without the miraculous birth or the illusions of grandeur, at only nine years old, Anakin is already showing the classic signs of the "wonder child motif." To begin with, he is the only the human to ever participate in the famed podraces. These races are fast, dangerous, and for only the most daring citizens in the galaxy. And because of large prizes not only in money but in fame too, they are also Anakin's ticket off of Tatooine. Using his intuitive "special powers," Anakin enters race after race, though admittedly at the behest of his slave master. But the final race that he enters, the Boonta Eve, is the winning one; the one that signals the closing of one part of his life and the opening of another. Anakin knows this, thinking to himself:

He couldn't explain it exactly, but he knew that tomorrow [the Boonta Eve race] would change his life. That strange ability to see what others did not, that sometimes gave him insights into what would happen, told him so. His future was coming up on him in a rush, he sensed. It was closing fast, giving him no time to consider, ascending with the certainty of a sunrise.

Qui-Gon and his companions were the bringers of that change, but he did not think even the Jedi Knight knew for certain what the end result would be. (Brooks, 153)

When Anakin wins the Boonta Eve race, he crosses one of the first thresholds on his journey, passing the first of many tests placed before him. This is even more so thanks to Qui-Gon Jinn, who, acting in a rather wily manner, gambles for and wins the freedom of Anakin from his slave master. Anakin is shocked but incredibly excited when he hears the news, but is quickly saddened when he learns that his mother was not also freed. Freedom means he can go away with Qui-Gon and train to be a Jedi. However, this freedom also leads to another test he must pass, one of leave-taking. His mother is closer to him than anybody else in his whole world, leaving her is an ordeal that may even have grave consequences in the future. Nevertheless, in the midst of saying goodbye, Anakin promises to return as a full-fledged Jedi Knight and rescue her from slavery. This promise holds within it his future path, but first we must visit one last example of the wonder child.

The political machinery involving the Jedi, Queen Amidala and Senator Palpatine grinds on subsequently, largely without Anakin, except for one major instance: the final space battle. On Coruscant, Anakin is denied training by the Jedi Council because he is too old. Qui-Gon, sensing Anakin's great destiny fights for his cause, insisting, "He *is* the chosen one, you must see that!" (Brooks, 237) – to no avail. Anakin is given permission to stay with Qui-Gon though as everyone travels on to Naboo to help the Queen save her people. During the final battle for freedom, Anakin is told to stay out of the way, but he is not fated for a small role. Seemingly by accident, he finds his way onto a spaceship, blasts off-planet and joins the raging dogfight. Something powerful is certainly with him as he flies into the enemy control ship, fires two torpedoes straight at the power source, and flies away to safety amidst the resulting explosions. The outcomes of all the different battle locations depend on this disabling of the control ship, so Anakin is really responsible for initiating the victories of all the "good guys" in the end. To the casual observer, it may seem impossible to believe that a nine year old child can accomplish so much. Again, this simply shows the power deep within Anakin Skywalker, the fated destiny he can and will fulfill no matter the intervening events.

When Qui-Gon is killed in a lightsaber duel with a newly risen Sith Lord, it now rests with his apprentice, Obi-Wan Kenobi, to train Anakin for Jedi knighthood. The Sith, sworn enemies of the Jedi, use the dark side of the Force in order to gain temporal power. The Jedi Council still has grave doubts about Anakin's clouded future, but they relent and grant Obi-Wan's request to take on his own apprentice. Many of the specific events of Anakin's Jedi quest during the following years still lie in shadow. This does not mean, however, that one cannot speculate some basic trends – including mythological ones – based on knowledge of Anakin's childhood, his fate, and his future, known from the last three *Star Wars* stories: *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back,* and *Return of the Jedi*. Two of Campbell's "transformations" apply during this time in Anakin's life, the Hero as Warrior and as Lover. In seeking Jedi knighthood, Anakin takes the first step into the life of a warrior. Jedi knights might be described as a combination of a medieval knight and of a monk, though also closely related to the Japanese Samurai warriors. They not only meditate upon the nature of the Force, but they are fierce warriors in battle. It is a precarious balance that must be strengthened daily, lest a Jedi fall into any form of extremism. As for the role of lover, Anakin falls in love with and marries Padmé Amidala, and together they will become the parents of the twins Luke Skywalker and Leia Organa. Interestingly, his incredible insight shows him some of this future quite early on. Witness the following passage from *The Phantom Menace,* when Anakin is nine and Padmé is fourteen:

"I'm going to marry you," [Anakin] said suddenly.

There was a moment of silence, and [Padmé] began laughing again, a sweet musical sound he didn't mind at all.

"I mean it," he insisted.

"You are an odd one," she said, her laughter dying away. "Why do you say that?"

He hesitated. "I guess because it's what I believe…"

Her smile was dazzling. "Well, I'm afraid I can't marry you…" she paused, searching her memory for his name.

"Anakin," he said.

"Anakin." She cocked her head. "You're just a little boy."

His gaze was intense as he faced her. "I won't always be," he said quietly. (Brooks, 114)

Indeed, he will not. However, Anakin's maturing years are fraught with danger as his loyalty, and his powerful abilities, are sought by different kinds of "masters." One is Obi-Wan, another is Chancellor Palpatine, the future Emperor of the Galactic Empire. Palpatine is "watching his career with great interest," while Obi-Wan does what he can in training. One cannot serve two masters, though, so Anakin – the Chosen One of Jedi prophecy – falls to the dark side.

Mythology is filled with stories of the greatest of all heroes making a journey into the underworld. What better representation of the underworld could there be than becoming Darth Vader? After a legendary battle with Obi-Wan Kenobi, Anakin emerges from the seeming defeat and scathing injuries as Vader, the Dark Lord of the Sith. Those injuries require the dark suit of armor and the infamous breathing mask. The evil Sith Lord, no longer entirely human, is single-handedly responsible for making the Jedi order extinct, among with other horrible, rage-induced actions.

Only Yoda and Vader's former master Obi-Wan escape the purge, though still losing much faith in the future – and prophecies. To them, Anakin-turned-into-Vader is lost forever. In his new life, he twists the ways of the Force into tools for evil. In service to his new master, Emperor Palpatine, he becomes the prideful tyrant. Prideful because he thought at the beginning, or was persuaded of it, that by joining forces with the obviously powerful Palpatine, he was doing good to lay the corrupt Old Republic of ten thousand years to rest. As the Emperor's Sith apprentice and right-hand man, Vader quickly rises in the Imperial ranks while gathering more and more power to his disposal. On the awesome battleship the Death Star, he even faces his old master Obi-Wan one last time. Obi-Wan is struck down by Vader, but not before out-witting him in the end. First, he somehow disappears without tasting the cruel edge of Vader's lightsaber. Secondly, and more importantly, he has already fulfilled his mission in helping Luke Skywalker, Vader's heretofore unknown son, begin his own Hero Journey.

Neither father nor son is aware of each other as Vader continues to commit rather unspeakable acts of evil. But at some point, Vader figures out who Luke is and begins to pursue him and his friends on a personal mission as they fight in the Rebel Alliance against the Empire, now truly revealed to be evil and much worse than even the corrupt Old Republic. On the cloudy, mysterious world of Bespin, serving as a mythical place of pain and betrayal for Luke and his friends, Vader reveals himself as Luke's father in an uneven lightsaber duel. Vader also reveals his plans for the two of them to rule

together, both already powerfully in touch with the Force. Luke escapes with his life – though losing a hand – only to meet his father once again in a climatic battle that both completes his own hero's journey and signals Vader's final transformations as a hero.

Both Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi had long ago lost hope in redeeming Darth Vader from the dark path he had chosen. His son Luke, though, knows that deep down inside, the wise and kind Jedi Anakin Skywalker still lived. Luke trains as much as he can after the near-disaster on Bespin, then moves voluntarily to the fateful confrontation with not only his father, but Emperor Palpatine also. On the way there, he confidently tells Vader, "I know there is still good in you." Vader talks about the power of the dark side, but finally sighs, "It is too late for me, Son."(Kahn, 426-427) Up in the Emperor's Throne Room, all three antagonists taunt each other as the last great battle between the Empire and Rebel Alliance rage on around and outside them. The Emperor, tired of Vader, is attempting to turn Luke to the dark side and destroy his father. Vader also wants to turn Luke, so that as father and son they may rule the galaxy together.

Luke, on the other hand, is mostly focused on finding Vader's hidden speck of humanity, bringing him back to the light side, and destroying the Emperor. The battle goes back and forth as Vader and Emperor try to turn Luke while he, largely untested so far, tries mostly to keep his emotions in check. Inadvertently, he reveals his knowledge of Leia Organa being his twin sister. Vader uses this revelation by threatening to turn her also. Luke lets go of his control, unleashes his anger and fear, and finally joins in a physical lightsaber battle with his father. Vader seems to weaken under this unleashed power until Luke succeeds in amputating Vader's hand, which is mechanical. As Luke stares at the wires protruding from the stump that is his father's arm, he looks at his own prosthetic hand and realizes the dangerous path he had been treading. He also realizes that destroying Vader was exactly what the Emperor wanted of him. Luke throws down his lightsaber and proclaims his refusal to give in to the dark side. The Emperor, in a move of careless anger, sets out to kill Luke with "Force lightning bolts" powered by the dark side. In one last desperate effort, Luke reaches out to the crippled Vader in a simple plea to a father's love. After a moment of deeply internal questioning, Anakin Skywalker overcomes his own dark self to reach out, pick up the Emperor and throw him down a bottomless shaft. It is done. The deed for which he had been conceived and born for, the act that only the Chosen One could have accomplished, is finished. Meanwhile in the larger battle arena, the battle has turned in favor of the Rebels, which is a chain reaction resulting from the death of the Emperor. Mortally wounded though, Anakin is now dying.

Now that he has acted as a kind of World Redeemer and finally rid the galaxy of the powerfully evil Emperor, all must prepare for the Departure of the Hero…

Now that he has acted as a kind of World Redeemer and finally rid the galaxy of the powerfully evil Emperor, all must prepare for the Departure of the Hero, Luke especially. He at first tries to rescue his dying father from the about to be destroyed Death Star, but Anakin finally tells Luke to leave him. Luke refuses, saying, "I've got to save you." Anakin responds with, "You already have, Luke." And with his final words:

Vader pulled Luke very close, spoke into his ear. "Luke, you were right…and you were right about me…Tell your sister…you were right." (Kahn, 466)

Here, then, is the death of the One Who Would Bring Balance to the Force. He had died twice really. Once, when he became Dark Vader, from which darkness he was reborn, and again after he had sacrificed himself to save his son and slay the Emperor. He goes now to join other Jedi in the oneness of

the Force, finally redeemed and complete. In tribute, Luke carries his father's body and dark armor that was Vader down to the forest planet below. There, while everyone else celebrates the end of the Empire, Luke bids farewell to the father he hardly knew:

[He] stood in a forest clearing before a great pile of logs and branches. Lying, still and robed, atop the mound, was the lifeless body of Darth Vader. Luke set a torch to the kindling.

As the flames enveloped the corpse, smoke rose from the vents in the mask, almost like a black spirit, finally freed. Luke stared with a fierce sorrow at the conflagration. Silently, he said his last goodbye. He, alone, had believed in the small speck of humanity remaining in his father. That redemption rose, now, with these flames, into the night. (Kahn, 469-470)

Moments later, Anakin appears ghostlike alongside two of his – and his son's – Jedi teachers, Master Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi, happy and purified at last.

From childhood, to adult years, to death, Anakin Skywalker transforms many times. Born as the Chosen One, he became the wonder child, fell to a dark lordship, sacrificed himself to be a savior, and died a redeemed father. He conquered both the light and the dark, knowing the later intimately, the only way he could fulfill his destined mission. And he brought balance to the Force by destroying Emperor Palpatine and eliminating the last living Sith in the galaxy. In doing so, he even went so far as to break through the very boundaries of the Force by bringing its two sides together and erasing the division between – the only one who could do such a deed. All of these transformations, some painful, some glorious, were needed to create Anakin the hero. The six stories that compose the *Star Wars* saga will always be the story of Anakin above all. Fated by prophecy, he ultimately fulfills his destiny and leaves a world purified through fire and love to his son and daughter, a new generation to proudly carry on the Skywalker name.

"...And in the time of greatest despair there shall come a savior,
and he shall be known as: THE SON OF THE SUNS."
Journal of the Whills, 3:127

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Recommendation

Spiritual Lessons from a Galaxy Far, Far Away

Title: Christian Wisdom of the Jedi Masters
Author: Dick Staub
ISBN: 0-7879-7894-9
Publisher: Jossey-Bass
Copyright: 2005

Reviewed by Reihla.

Prior to reading *Christian Wisdom of the Jedi Masters* I had never heard of Dick Staub. Being both Christian and wary of any book that explains faith in terms of pop culture, I decided to do a little investigating prior to reading. With little effort I discovered that Staub is a highly regarded nationally syndicated radio and television interviewer, the director of the Center for Faith and Culture and an adjunct professor at Seattle Pacific University. To be more specific, I found that he is a Christian and that the primary focus of all of his work is on modern culture and its relationship to religion.

Christian Wisdom of the Jedi Masters was, by Staub's own admission, a book written largely because Christian young people today want to be "Jedi Christians" but are following a generation who failed to produce any "Yoda-like" teachers. They have fallen away from their faith en-masse because it lacks the means to inspire them mentally and spiritually. He admits that he feels "Christianity is always just one generation from extinction" and describes the purpose of the book as a kind of mentorship. It is his hope that the book will deliver basic spiritual truths from one generation to another much as the Jedi passed their knowledge from master to padawan.

That isn't to say that the author has delusions of grandeur. He full well admits he is no master of Christian tenets, claiming that he knows his own embodiment of these truths is flawed. Still, with humility he explains his desire is to kindle the fires of spirituality in the next generation, to give them a point of divine connection to which they can relate. He explains the book as "an endeavor of love; an attempt to recover the lost sayings of the Jedi" in a Christian context.

As I read the book, I found myself surprised by the ease with which Jedi tenets translate to foundation principles of Christianity. Taking it even further, it was obvious that those same Jedi ideals could be applied to many other faiths. Indeed, Staub pulls wisdom from Buddhist, Jewish, Taoist and even mystical teachings and compares them to biblical wisdom. I believe people of all religious backgrounds, perhaps even those who claim no particular faith, can find something to enjoy in the reading of this book. It illustrates well the struggle of trying to adhere to one's beliefs while living in the modern world.

I found most of the *Star Wars*/Christian parallels to be effective (the wisdom of a child, power in the blood, prophecies, there is no try, just to list a few) the highlight for me was the chapter titled "Loving Your Father." Though I disagree with Staub when he states that Luke and Leia *both* forgive their father, he makes excellent use of Luke Skywalker's struggle to forgive Vader in an effort to explain why children should resolve negative feelings towards their own parents. He parallels Luke's parental struggle to our own by boiling it down to this: "You cannot control your parents' attitudes and actions,

but you can master your own, and in your hope, love, and forgiveness you can be healed and become a Jedi in the process."

Christian Wisdom of the Jedi Masters is very much an encouragement to young people today to learn from those wiser than themselves and to pass on what they have learned, to become spiritual Jedi in their own realms of influence.

Issue 7

July 2005

Brothers and Sons:
Lack of Communication in the Relationship Between Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi

by FernWithy

In *Revenge of the Sith*, Padmé Naberrie Skywalker advances the opinion that the war engulfing the galaxy has been caused by a massive failure of communication. This is borne out in several ways over the course of the movie, as garbled transmissions, deceptions, and misunderstandings lead inevitably to tragedy, on both the personal and galactic scale.

Many of these miscommunications are the result of malicious planning by Chancellor Palpatine, who is bringing his plan for Empire to its conclusion, but perhaps the most primal – the split between Anakin Skywalker and Obi-Wan Kenobi – is the result not of design, but of two men who have radically different understandings of the galaxy and of one another.

Anakin, the son.

Twice in the course of *Attack of the Clones*, Anakin refers to Obi-Wan as a father figure. The first, during the mad chase after assassin Zam Wessell, is to Obi-Wan himself, when Obi-Wan jokes, "You'll be the death of me." A horrified Anakin asks him not to say such things – "You're the closest thing I have to a father." Later, on Tatooine, when he learns that Obi-Wan has been captured, Padmé tries to inspire him on to a rescue mission by pointing out that Obi-Wan is his master, his friend...and again, Anakin's response is, "He's like my father!"

For fatherless Anakin, no concept could hold greater power.

Throughout the *Star Wars* saga, it is the parent-child bond with which Anakin is most closely associated. In *The Phantom Menace*, we meet a nine-year-old boy whose close relationship with his mother is evident, but who also attaches immediately to a man who shows him kindness and interest. It is obvious from his reactions to Qui-Gon Jinn that Anakin has longed for this kind of response. The sequence of events recalls the practice in some traditional societies in which a boy leaves the world of the mothers and follows his father into the world of men – in this case, Anakin, apparently a son of the Force, follows Qui-Gon away from his mother into the world of the Jedi. Further, when they first arrive on Coruscant, Qui-Gon makes a formal declaration of his "fatherhood" – he declares that he himself will train the boy. This reflects the ancient Roman custom by which fathers legally recognized their children, in which "the father must perform a public act through which he affirms his intention to be his child's father...To be a father – unlike the case of the mother, as we'll repeatedly insist – it is not enough to generate a child, fatherhood also requires a specific act of will. Fatherhood is always a decision and always implies an adoption."[1]

Anakin's story is a traditional discovery of the father...until Qui-Gon is killed by Darth Maul in the reactors beneath Theed.

At this point, outside of Anakin's view (at the funeral, he appears to have no knowledge of the machinations), Obi-Wan Kenobi, Qui-Gon's apprentice at the time of his death, steps in to take on Qui-Gon's role. Anakin is frightened and unsure when he asks, "What's going to happen to me now?" but Obi-Wan assures him that the path he would have followed is still going to be there. Anakin understands this to mean that Obi-Wan has taken on Qui-Gon's role – the iconic father role for which he has longed.

When we meet them again ten years later, it is clear that Obi-Wan has taken his duties seriously, if not always successfully in the case of his headstrong young padawan. Anakin has become a rebellious adolescent, and – as is common – has focused his rebellion on his father figure, Obi-Wan. And yet, when Obi-Wan isn't present, Anakin praises him ("as powerful as Master Windu and as wise as Master Yoda") and expresses his fond exasperation ("Obi-Wan would be very cranky...") as well as his youthful resentment and anger. When the woman he loves speaks of his relationship with Obi-Wan as merely being that of a "friend" or a "mentor," he lashes out, declaring that Obi-Wan is like his father. And in *Revenge of the Sith*, Anakin, like Aeneas carrying his father Anchises from the ruins of Troy, carries Obi-Wan through a disintegrating battle ship, despite the risk to himself and the Chancellor, to return him home. When they meet again many years later, Anakin (now Vader) continues to rebel against Kenobi's influence, yet refers to him familiarly by a common paternal epithet ("old man"). Their relationship, from Anakin's point of view, remains vertical – Obi-Wan is the master who must either be respected or defeated and displaced.

Obi-Wan, the brother.

Mirroring Anakin's declarations in *Attack of the Clones*, twice in *Revenge of the Sith*, Obi-Wan refers to Anakin as his brother. When Yoda instructs him to confront Anakin on Mustafar, Obi-Wan protests that he cannot kill Anakin, because Anakin is his brother. Later, when the duel is over and Anakin lies in pain on the volcanic rock, Obi-Wan cries out, "You were my brother! I loved you!"

For twelve years, Obi-Wan Kenobi has been living in a different story than Anakin has.

When we first meet him, he is Qui-Gon's respectful and loyal "son," a dutiful padawan who only expresses mild irritation when Qui-Gon refuses to play by the Council's rules. He obviously loves his master and wishes him well, and is in no particular hurry to reach his Trials and, metaphorically speaking, move away from home. He knows of Qui-Gon's habit of picking up stragglers, even joking about "another pathetic life form" when Qui-Gon says that he is going to bring Anakin back to the Queen's ship, and when he first meets Anakin, he sees him fully as one of his master's many projects.

When Qui-Gon announces that he will train Anakin, Obi-Wan knows that he is being displaced, his own position being filled by someone else. He is on a level with Anakin – a padawan of Qui-Gon Jinn, another son of a common father. In the scenes preceding the final battle of *The Phantom Menace*, the two reconcile from their brief argument, and Qui-Gon gives a version of a father's blessing of his son. Immediately thereafter, they meet Darth Maul, and Qui-Gon is killed. Obi-Wan is with him when he dies (as Luke Skywalker will later be with Anakin at *his* death), and promises him that he will take care of Anakin. It is Qui-Gon's wish, and Obi-Wan fully intends to carry it out. He becomes Anakin's guardian – a custodial sibling. Like most good-hearted siblings in such a situation, Obi-Wan is determined to carry it out, but the situation can be volatile. Dr. Laurie Kramer points out that "such an upheaval can be restricting. 'The ages from 18 to 25 are really a time of life when you're exploring,' says Kramer. 'If the older siblings are taking care of the younger ones, they've lost that opportunity to be free.'"[2]

Obi-Wan goes from padawan to master with no time to spend as a knight, and takes on a challenging padawan who has been raised in an unorthodox way. He is forced to grow up quickly, and to improvise with Anakin. He takes on a strict role when necessary, but seems glad to give it up in times of crisis. When Anakin is knighted in the Clone Wars cartoon series, Obi-Wan leads up to the ceremony by suggesting that they should no longer be master and apprentice, but brothers – an equal relationship. ("As children enter adolescence, sibling relationships become less asymmetric and more egalitarian

because siblings are more similar in competence and developmental status (Buhrmester, 1992; Buhrmester and Furman, 1990)."[3])

Throughout *Revenge of the Sith*, Obi-Wan behaves in a collegial way toward Anakin…The relationship, from Obi-Wan's point of view, is horizontal and equal once Anakin comes of age.

Throughout *Revenge of the Sith*, Obi-Wan behaves in a collegial way toward Anakin – the tolerant older brother, looking out for the welfare of the younger one, but eager to be on an equal playing ground. The betrayal he feels is the behavior of a peer, a brother – a man who is what he might be. In *A New Hope*, he speaks of Anakin as a friend and a great warrior, while he treats Luke very much like a friendly uncle would treat a beloved nephew. The relationship, from Obi-Wan's point of view, is horizontal and equal once Anakin comes of age.

The passage of time, and a change in relationship.

It has been posited in various places that the change in terminology is a function of the passage of time between *Attack of the Clones* and *Revenge of the Sith*, that they have, as Obi-Wan suggested, *become* brothers, that Anakin has adopted Obi-Wan's perception of their relationship.

Anakin's behavior in *Revenge of the Sith*, both before and after his fall, does not support this thesis. Aside from the aforementioned image of Anakin carrying Obi-Wan as Aeneas carries Anchises, Anakin continues to display decidedly non-fraternal attitudes toward his master. At no point is he more comfortable discussing his personal issues with Obi-Wan than with other authority figures ("Adolescents also feel more comfortable to talk with and seek help from their siblings than from their parents, regarding certain issues like dating, trying out ideas, and sex (Cotterell, 1996; Moser et al., 1996; Tucker et al., 1997)"[4]), and in fact actively *rejects* the idea of seeking his help on personal matters when Padmé suggests it. This is notable because it is a common observation both of sibling researchers and of siblings themselves that older siblings serve as a "buffer" between younger siblings and parents.[5] It's clear that both Obi-Wan and Padmé see the authority figure in question as the collective Jedi Council, which has the power to pass judgment on Anakin's life.

It is equally clear that, for Anakin himself, the authority figure that matters is Obi-Wan himself; the Council is just, in his view, a point of frustration. He doesn't want Obi-Wan's help gaining their approval; he wants *Obi-Wan's* approval, as is demonstrated in their last scene as friends, when Obi-Wan is leaving for the world of Utapau. Anakin catches him and apologizes for being a trial as a student, addressing him as a master. Obi-Wan temporarily reverts to the verticality of Anakin's perception in order to give him a blessing much like the one Qui-Gon gave to him, and Anakin visibly blossoms at the praise. Immediately following this encounter, he is able to see Palpatine for what he is and return to the Temple to warn the remaining members of the Jedi Council (who lack Obi-Wan's understanding of him and make the fatal mistake of leaving him alone). After his turn, he still remains reluctant to follow Palpatine's order to kill Obi-Wan, instead hoping that Obi-Wan will come around, see the Imperial point of view, and join him – to validate his own choices, which of course Obi-Wan cannot do. It is only after a firm refusal of this that Anakin makes any effort to destroy his master.

Differing expectations.

The difference in perception isn't just a matter of semantics. It reveals a network of differing expectations between the two men, which results in frustrations and miscommunications that lead to tragedy.

The more Obi-Wan withdraws from his guardian role and strives for fraternal equality, the more ill-at-ease Anakin seems to feel. He seeks approval, but finds camaraderie; he seeks the stability of the paternal figure, but finds the complex malleability of a fraternal one. Obi-Wan, meanwhile, seeks the companion and peer that a brother should be, but continues to find a puzzling adolescent son. Anakin tries to re-create the vertical relationship when he learns of his own impending fatherhood – he will hear nothing of the "problem" of Padmé's pregnancy, and thinks of it only as a blessing, and someone he must protect as head of his family. Obi-Wan continues to seek more horizontal relationships, building a network of peers that include "outsiders" to his way of life, like Bail Organa and Padmé herself, as well as formerly "higher-up" members of the Order, like Yoda.

This is not the fault of either man, and neither is *wrong* about the shape of the relationship. When things are going well, they are able to get along with only mild confusion between them. Unfortunately, for Anakin, things stop going well, first when his mother is kidnapped by Tusken Raiders and later when he is plagued by visions of danger to his wife. At these times, he looks in vain for stability, and when it is denied, he becomes lost and angry. The connection to the father shapes a boy's identity as a man, and when he "cannot become the son of his father...one main result, in clinical terms, is rage."[6] It is often a deeply misogynistic rage, though in Anakin this only comes through in rather muted form, disguised even to himself, and he is ashamed of it.

Even with this, Anakin might have survived his admittedly difficult adolescence, or Obi-Wan might have seen his needs more clearly, but there was another factor, clouding their vision and their communication: Palpatine intuited from the moment Anakin came to his attention that the boy was desperately searching for a father who would approve of him, as Qui-Gon had for such a brief time. He promises to "watch [Anakin's] career with great interest," and by all accounts, follows up on this admirably in the years between *The Phantom Menace* and *Attack of the Clones*. By the time of *Revenge of the Sith*, he is the only remaining person in Anakin's life who regularly approves of him, even calling him "Son" on a regular basis. (Anakin, curiously, at no point in the films returns the familial designation. Palpatine is a friend, a mentor – the words Padmé used to refer to Obi-Wan's relationship to Anakin – but he is never named as a father figure, no matter how heavily he's suggesting such a role.) Anakin is tragically open to this manipulation for far too long, because his father-need is as blind a spot for Obi-Wan as his mother-need is to the Council.

None of this excuses the horrible choices Anakin makes in *Revenge of the Sith* – those are on the head only of the individual who makes them. Obi-Wan was acting in good faith and from a valid perspective, and Anakin had this perspective brought up often enough that he should have understood it better than he appeared to. However, understanding the nature of the relationship that brought them to the fires of Mustafar and their tortured, confused confrontation above the lava, sheds light on what Anakin may have been feeling when those choices were made.

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[1] Zola, Luigi. (tr. by Henry Martin). *The Father: Historical, Psychological, and Cultural Perspectives*. (Taylor and Francis, Inc. Philadelphia, PA, 2001). Pg. 13.

[2] "Siblings Raising Siblings: For parentless children who stay together, growing up is a challenge." *Time*, May 14, 2001 v157 i19 (TIME Bonus Section/Families).

[3] Yeh, Hsiu-Chen and Lempers, Jacques D. "Perceived sibling relationships and adolescent development," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, April 2004 v33 i2 p133.

[4] Ibid.

[5] FernWithy, "An informal survey for older siblings." June 6, 2005. *http://fernwithy.livejournal.com/282200.html.*

For this essay, an informal survey of older siblings revealed this attitude in several responses, including:

"As the eldest, I felt that another of my roles was to be a buffer between my parents and my siblings..."

"I suspect they expect me to continue to be a bit of a role model and possibly to intercede with the parents for them if needed..."

"In adulthood, I expect him to come to me with problems he doesn't feel comfortable telling our parents about and ask me for help when he needs it..."

"This next part is probably unique to our family, but it's kind of important to our dynamic, so... when our father gets angry, they expect me to be a buffer if I can, to distract him or calm him down if it's possible..."

"I honestly felt it was my job as an older sibling to stand as a shield between her and my parents so that she wasn't as harmed by their bad parenting as I was..."

"I expect myself to help them when they need it, and defend them against unfair/unreasonable punishments from my parents..."

"Responsibilities - well, keep them safe, and although I was very bossy as a child, I tended to be their advocates with my parents; in the kids vs. adults thing, I came down on the kid side."

[6] Blankenhorn, David. *Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem.* (Basic Books, New York, 1995), pg. 30.

Recommendation

Less Fiction, More Science

Website: *Star Wars*: Realities Beyond the Myth
URL: www.exn.ca/starwars/home.cfm
Owner: The Exploration Network/Discovery Channel Canada

Reviewed by ami-padme.

There's a saying that it's only science "fiction" until someone does it. While the question of whether *Star Wars* is truly science fiction continues to spark debate – I feel it's a mythological fantasy that happens to have science fiction trappings – there's little question that the science and technology presented in the saga have inspired people from all walks of life to wonder just how much of it is possible in our galaxy.

The Exploration Network's website, *Star Wars*: Realities Beyond the Myth (www.exn.ca/starwars/home.cfm), researches much of the science of *Star Wars* in an in-depth, informative, and enjoyable manner. Everything from lightsabers to solar sails to cloning technology to hyperdrives is researched, spelling out the likelihood of each item ever becoming real.

Want to have your own lightsaber? You'll have to figure out how to generate a great deal of power from that small, handy hilt. And watch out for any reflective surfaces, as your laser beam might just be turned back on yourself, to rather disastrous results. Ready to traverse the galaxy with your hyperdrive-powered spaceship? You'll have to wait awhile before it leaves the realm of fantasy and becomes plausible scientific theory (even wormholes are a slightly more realistic prospect, depending on who you ask). Ready to clone yourself into your very own army? You'll need to find a lot of surrogate hosts for those potential stormtroopers first.

Each section details the science behind the movie magic, references field experts, and includes a small message board for discussion. There are multiple videos available as well. The "You Asked for It" section answers questions raised by the site's visitors and other *Star Wars* fans – such as whether it's biologically possible for creatures like Yoda and Jabba the Hutt to exist, or if a binary sun system like Tatooine's makes physical sense.

Realities Beyond the Myth presents several complex lessons in physics and biology in easy to understand ways, and gives *Star Wars* fans a new way to look at the saga.

Discovering *Star Wars*

Sithcount

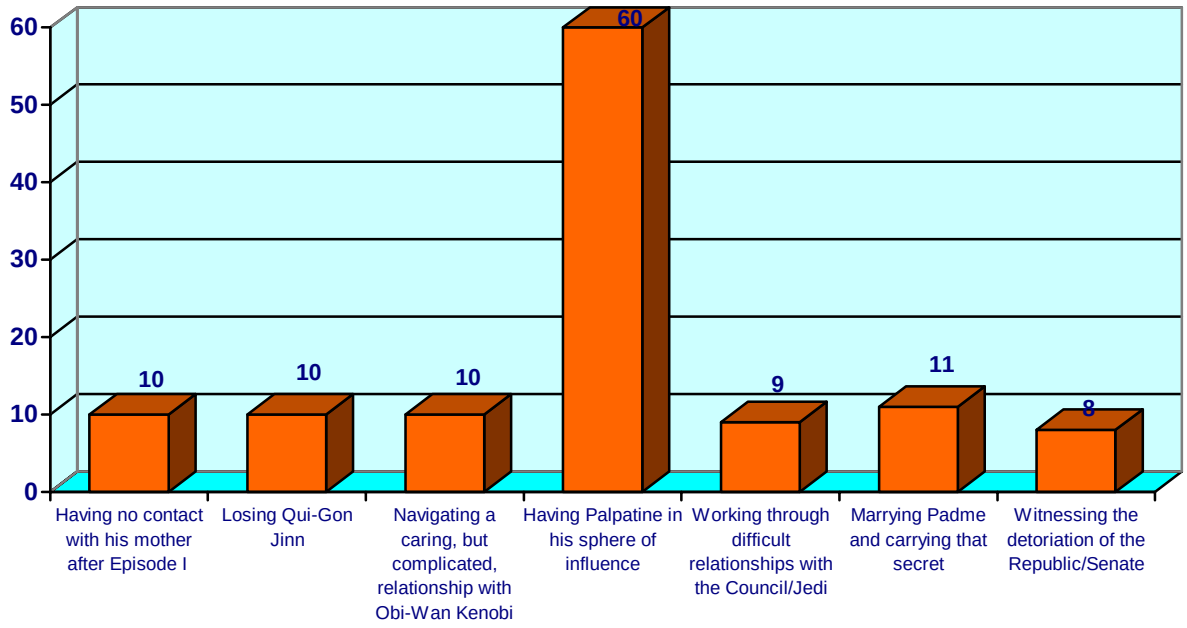
I saw *Star Wars: A New Hope* back in 1977 when I was in the Marine Corps stationed at Cherry Point in North Carolina. I remember driving past the theater, thinking to myself that I had to find an opportunity to see that movie. I finally did and thought it was great, especially Darth Vader as the ultimate bad guy. Though I saw and enjoyed the entire Original Trilogy, *Star Wars* wasn't much more than a set of cool movies to me back then.

Then, in 1998 I married a die-hard fan. When our friends caught Episode I fever and bought us all tickets to the midnight premier, I gamely went along. Their enthusiasm was infectious, and once I saw Darth Maul and his double-ended lightsaber I was hooked. By the time Episode II came out, my wife and I could often be found shopping for the newest action figures at Wal-Mart in the late night/early morning hours. Just for fun I made myself a Darth Vader costume and now I'm constantly looking for ways to improve it and make it more authentic.

Now that the saga is complete, I consider myself a true fan. The wrong choices Anakin Skywalker made are the choices we all face and his fall reminds us that we could share his fate. Knowing that even Darth Vader was not beyond redemption gives us hope and makes *Star Wars* an enduring myth for our generation.

Poll Results:

What – aside from his own choices – led most directly to Anakin's fall?



Issue 8

August 2005

The Perils of Padmé:
The Short Life and Fast Times of a Tragic Heroine

by lazypadawan

For years fans have wondered who was the mysterious, unnamed mother of Luke and Leia. The only hint of who she had been was Leia's vague impressions expressed in *Return of the Jedi*: kind, very beautiful, but sad.

Finally with the release of *The Phantom Menace*, we were introduced to her: Queen Amidala of the Naboo, otherwise known as Padmé Amidala Naberrie. The young girl-woman in *The Phantom Menace* and *Attack of the Clones* was in many ways in the mold of her future daughter: smart, wise, resourceful, brave, and if need be, good in a fight. But with *Revenge of the Sith*, she joins a sisterhood of memorable women who suffer tragedy.

Padmé shares common traits with many traditional tragic heroines but in some ways she is unique. Traditionally, a tragic heroine suffers because of her own tragic flaw and/or the flaws of someone else, even her society or culture. Aristotle referred to this flaw as "harmatia," the accurate definition of which is closer to "mistake," "error," or "failing" than an innate flaw. Aristotle believed the flaw must result from something that is a central part of one's virtue, which goes wrong due to a misunderstanding or lack of knowledge.[1] Antigone suffers because of her devotion to divine law, which demands she bury her brother, bringing her into conflict with the inhumane decree of King Creon, who forbade burial.[2] Ophelia suffers because of Hamlet's inner conflict. Juliet's death is brought about not only because of her love for Romeo but also because of the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets.

If Padmé had personal flaws according to Aristotle's definition, some may argue they would be her naivete, her innocence, her trust in the Republic as it was rotting away from within, her trust in Palpatine, and even her love for Anakin. Padmé tends to put a lot of faith in the innate good of others; Obi-Wan notes in the young readers' version of the *Revenge of the Sith* novelization that Padmé "always believes the best of everyone, until she's forced to see the worst. Such faith should be a strength, not a weakness."[3] She suffers because of that faith in her leaders, the Republic, and in Anakin, because they all fail her. In fact, Padmé embodies the Republic's ideals and virtues: democracy, restraint over tyranny, and working for the good of others. Padmé is also associated with youth and beauty as well as wisdom. She comes from a world teeming with life and as the female lead of the prequel trilogy, as well as the mother of the heroes of the classic trilogy, she embodies the feminine, the anima.

At the beginning of the saga, the Republic was in its golden age. Padmé's homeworld of Naboo was an opulent and verdant world with stunning architecture and natural wonders. Its people were dressed nearly as elaborately as its ruler. Even the sleek spacecraft reflected a great appreciation for beauty. Women are seen everywhere in the prequels, in all stations of life; pilots, Jedi, Senators, handmaidens, bodyguards, and mothers. But the galaxy was changing and the young queen was caught in the middle of that change. She is brought in as a pawn in a political game that she understands too late. She is also introduced to the boy destined to change her life forever.

For most of the prequel trilogy, Padmé has been in constant danger and in need of protection. *The Phantom Menace* and *Attack Of The Clones* have a pattern. 1. Padmé is rescued, 2. Padmé is placed under protection, and 3. Padmé willingly leaves that protection to take action herself. She spends a great deal of time courting her fate despite the efforts of others to protect her. In *The Phantom Menace*, she is rescued from the Trade Federation and is able to remain on Coruscant where she is safe. Yet she chooses

to return to Naboo to engage the Trade Federation in battle and re-take her planet. In *Attack of the Clones*, she is rescued after two attempts on her life and is put into Anakin's protection. Yet she chooses to first go to Tatooine with Anakin then she convinces him to go with her to Geonosis to save Obi-Wan, where once again she is forced to fight for her life. She narrowly avoids being killed by beasts, survives a battle that kills several Jedi, and then avoids serious injury after falling out of a ship. She gives several references to dying in the films. In *The Phantom Menace*, she mentions twice that her people on Naboo were dying. In *Attack of the Clones*, she mentions death four times during her love pledge to Anakin: "I'm not afraid to die...I've been dying a little bit each day since you came back into my life...our lives are about to be destroyed anyway...before we die I want you to know."

At the same time, the feminine energy, the anima, is slowly being destroyed. In *Attack of the Clones*, Zam Wessel, Cordé the handmaiden, and most importantly, Anakin's mother Shmi, die violently. In *Revenge of the Sith*, the final phase of destruction takes place. We see the betrayal and murder of two female Jedi: Stass Allie and Aayla Secura. Aayla in particular is murdered in an especially gruesome way, shot repeatedly in close range by several clonetroopers. Ironically she was on Felucia, a world teeming with life and giant blooming flowers. It climaxes with Padmé's death after performing the ultimate feminine act, giving birth. She dies far from her fertile living world where she'd planned to have her child(ren), in a cold environment deep in space, and attended to by droids that cannot understand what is wrong with her.

Unlike the pattern with previous two prequels, Padmé does not need rescuing from external threats in *Revenge of the Sith*. Dooku is dead and the Trade Federation seems to have forgotten about her. The irony is the external dangers from which Anakin seeks to protect her from throughout the prequel trilogy do not bring about her end. It's not the Trade Federation or hired assassins but her own shattered soul. However, like the other films, she chooses to leave her haven, this time on Coruscant, to take charge when things are dire. When Captain Typho volunteers to go with her, she refuses, saying the matter is personal and that she is no longer in danger. Finally, she could no longer avoid her destiny.

Some fans complained that Padmé was marginalized in *Revenge of the Sith*, but her isolation makes sense in the context of the story. Here she was at the height of her feminine power, pregnant and able to share a form of subconscious bond on occasion with Anakin. Yet the Empire-to-be has no place for her. She is trapped and alone.

Padmé's death recalls traditional tragic heroines such as Isolde, who dies of a broken heart after her love Tristan dies. In Arthurian legend, Elaine The Lady of Shallot dies of love for Lancelot.[4] In fact, dying of a broken heart is part of many legends, folk tales, and ghost stories. Others see parallels with Othello's Desdemona, who like Padmé is strangled by a husband who believes she has betrayed by him. Others view Padmé as being similar to Ophelia, who commits suicide after Hamlet rejects her. Because Ophelia and Desdemona are commonly viewed as passive victims, and Padmé had been a proactive character, some felt her death did not befit her character.

Padmé was as much a symbiont with her time and place as she was with Anakin. When the Republic era passes, she passes.

There is a literal way of looking at Padmé's death and a symbolic way. Padmé was as much a symbiont with her time and place as she was with Anakin. When the Republic era passes, she passes. In a cut scene from *Attack of the Clones*, the lesson in Padmé's story about the refugees she tried to help as a child was that those who cannot adapt die. She cannot adapt to this new galaxy. Moreover, she refuses to adapt. She tells Anakin he is going down a path she cannot follow. She bitterly utters, "So this is how liberty dies, with thunderous applause," after Palpatine

crowns himself Emperor before a cheering Senate. When Vader in a rage cuts off her breathing, it symbolizes that the Empire, as personified by Anakin, is killing her. She suffers not only the death throes of the Republic and its ideals, she also suffers with the physical and spiritual pain Anakin endures in his transformation into the Darth Vader we know from the classic trilogy. The film intercuts between Vader's agony on the operating table and Padmé's dying moments as she gives birth. When Vader's transformation is complete, she dies.

With Padmé gone, the aesthetics of the *Star Wars* universe changes: we see the utilitarian set of the Star Destroyer, the beauty of the earlier ships gone. The beautiful, colorful, and elegant costumes have been replaced by simpler and more drab garments in shades of gray. Even the last time we see Naboo in the prequels, all of the citizens are dressed in funereal black. We see of glimpse of the Empire's new order, a Star Destroyer crew made up entirely of men. Instead of the natural beauty of a planet, we witness the skeletal beginnings of the Death Star.

Yet in the end, unlike most other tragic heroines, Padmé wins. Those who dismiss Padmé as weak should consider this alternative view of Desdemona: "Desdemona's goodness furthermore is not simply passive or weak but an act of will...her refusal to blame Othello for his terrible treatment of her...must not be viewed as simply subservience but as a self-willed refusal to accept a bad opinion of the husband she has chosen...she stands by her love for him as something sacred, with a martyr-like determination: she tells Emilia, 'his unkindness may defeat my life/But never taint my love.'"[5] Padmé, through her own will, refuses to believe Anakin is unredeemable. Ultimately Padmé is right about Anakin; there was still good in him and he could be turned back to the light. Her children bring down the Empire and restore the old values of the Republic. Padmé's life may have been short but she was never truly a victim.

Endnotes:

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[3] Wrede, Patricia C. *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*, Scholastic, 2005, page 153.

[4] womenmyth.com, "Women of Arthurian Mythology."

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Perinatal Imagery in the *Star Wars* Trilogy

by Ron Newbold

ABSTRACT: Stanislav Grof's four perinatal matrices provide a useful guide to why certain types of imagery appear in the *Star Wars* trilogy and to the dynamics of the struggle between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader. The human struggle to be born imprints experiences upon the neonate so strongly that they influence the nature of postnatal imagination and behavior. That primal struggle tends to be constantly relived throughout our lives. So when films such as *Star Wars* project imagery evocative of that struggle, they mirror and evoke memories powerfully present in the unconscious. The opportunity to vicariously relive those experiences is part of the attraction of the trilogy, contributing to its unparalleled worldwide appeal.

"...a return to the womb. And we can take the analogy further: The walls of the room begin to close in on its inhabitants just before their final release through a small door – rather like the contractions that push a baby out into the world. So on the one hand the experience is that of being consumed by the Death Star; on the other, this is an ordeal of initiation and rebirth."[1]
– Mary Henderson, Star Wars: The Magic of Myth

"Star Wars *gives birth to a sense of human complicity, as it involves us in a worthy struggle."*[2]
– J. P. Telotte, "The Dark Side of the Force"

"One would be naïve indeed to believe that so great a cataclysm (birth) would not leave its mark. Its traces are everywhere; on the skin...in all our human folly, in our madness, in our tortures, our prisons, in legends, epics, and our myths." [3]
-- *Frederick Leboyer*, Birth without Violence

Pervasive Perinatal Elements and *Star Wars*'s Popularity

The powerful appeal of the *Star Wars* trilogy has been explained in various ways, from the technical and special effects wizardry that eroticises speed and produces spectacular scenes to the extensive use of universal mythic themes and archetypes that resonate in the consciousness of the viewer. George Lucas's own comments make it clear that the fit between the trajectory of the trilogy's narrative and Joseph Campbell's monomyth of the hero[4] is no accident.

However, creators work at an unconscious level too. And it is important to note that the Campbell monomyth is, according to the evidence described below, itself shaped by perinatal experiences normally beyond conscious recall, that is, by experiences the fetus had in the womb, during birth, and immediately after birth. It then follows that the extent to which these unconscious powerful forces are tapped can not only determine the content of the narrative, but the appeal it has for an audience.

Any film, any narrative, cannot avoid using some perinatal imagery, for reasons which should also become clear soon. Dreams, like creative works, are products of the unconscious, and a study of 590 dreams showed sixty percent of them contained such birth-related imagery. Indeed, several writers have noted the blatant perinatal imagery of some scenes in the *Star Wars* trilogy, but without apparently appreciating what was involved. Neither were they aware of how those elements relate to certain kindred material, in particular to the Oedipal struggle between Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader. In this article I will seek to redress this lack by presenting the pervasively perinatal elements of the *Star Wars* tapestry along with an understanding – based on the extensive research of Stanislav Grof into the perinatal unconscious – of the significance of that perinatal weave.

Grof's Birth Stages: Shaping Behavior for Life

Nearly two decades ago it could be written that "a vast body of psychological material on birth feelings has accumulated in the past two decades."[5] Of course, the evidence is even more compelling today. Deep regression of subjects by means of primal therapy, LSD, immersion tanks, holotropic breathing, and hypnosis has exposed fetal and neonatal experiences to verbalized recall. The conclusion: Not only is the fetus extremely sensitive to stimuli, but its experiences just before, during, and after birth embed themselves so deeply in the unconscious that they shape behavior and thought for life as the individual tries to bring some congruence between his or her unconscious preoccupations and the external world.

Birth, in particular, is an experience too overwhelming to be assimilated and defended against by immature nervous systems or digested by the unconscious. It has to be controlled by being projected into the imagination or dream life, or by being acted out in some way. Utilizing an extraordinary mass of clinical data from his research, Stanislav Grof devised a four-stage scheme of perinatal experience that provides matrices for arranging and interpreting fantasy and behavior.[6] Furthermore – and this is germane to a major point of this article – if an individual was particularly impressed and imprinted by one or two of these perinatal matrices, or stages, his or her postnatal thought, artistic expression, and behavior tend to reflect this.

Grof's stages, in brief, are as follows: Stage 1, the matrix of security and union, relates to the primal union with the mother – an intrauterine stage of symbiosis when, ideally, security and satisfaction of all needs are enjoyed and where inner and outer are not differentiated. Stage 2, persecution and pressure, corresponds to the onset of labor, when chemical changes and muscular contractions start to occur and the fetus feels the effect of an alarmingly changed and pressurized environment as the cervix remains closed. Incipient uterine contractions may be experienced as an attack, for example, by a huge octopus. Stage 3, struggle and sensation, relates to the opening of the cervix and propulsion along the birth canal when a struggle for survival amidst enormous pressures ensues. Immense energy is absorbed and released; there are feelings of suffocation and of powerful currents streaming through the body. Stage 4, triumph and survival, corresponds to exit from the birth canal, decompression, relief, relaxation, and physical separation from the mother.

Let us now look at how these elements express themselves in the *Star Wars* trilogy.

Stage 1 in *Star Wars*: Harsh, Barren, and Promising

Imagery in the trilogy evocative of Stage 1 is not plentiful. If one sees Luke as treading the path of the "hero with a thousand faces," he must start from a state of comparatively blissful and primal innocence, such as life on his uncle's farm on Tatooine. The surrounding landscape has a certain rugged beauty and majesty and permits a degree of agriculture and self-sufficiency.

But it is also dry, harsh, and barren...not the bounteous paradise typical of Stage 1 imagery. Luke is aware enough of the predatory Sandpeople and the persecutory forces of the Empire to feel less than entirely secure. His emotional needs are not satisfied. Frustrated with the drudgery of farm life, he longs to join his peers at the space academy and become a fighter pilot. He feels trapped and confined, and he chafes at the authority of Uncle Owen, who does not want him to follow his father's footsteps. Luke by no means sees the world as idyllic, nor as transcending good and evil. Scenes of natural or palatial beauty, such as the Endor forest, do occur spasmodically throughout the trilogy, but they tend not to be concordant with security and bliss – the frozen wastes of the icy planet Hoth spring to mind.

However, in learning of the Force from Obi-Wan Kenobi, Luke is given an intimation of something that mystically unifies the cosmos and transcends time and space, a unified field that permits telepathy,

telekinesis, hypnosis, and identification with interstellar space. It registers the annihilation of the planet Alderaan, so that Obi-Wan can sense millions of souls perishing – "a great disturbance in the Force." Giving way to intuition and the Force, as Luke does in the attack on the Death Star in *Star Wars* (henceforth SW, the first story in the trilogy) is precisely the confident and serene surrender to a benevolent, protective guidance ("it will be with you always") that marks the attitude of this stage. The Universe is a mystery to be experienced rather than a riddle to be solved. So although Stage 1 imagery of bounteous security is not abundant, the abstract notion of "the Force" is a salient Stage 1 characteristic.

Stage 2 in the Trilogy: Predicaments Aplenty!

Stage 2 imagery, on the other hand, is plentiful. The imagery of this of Grof's stages revolves around a sense of entrapment, of being subject to inexplicable and unjustified threat, a sense of being unable to escape from perpetual suffering, endless terror, or unavoidable doom, of being a victim. It generates visions of imprisonment, torture, mutilation, inquisition, malevolent plotters, black magicians, demonic forces, the fall of angels, dehumanized and grotesque automata and robots, labyrinths, dangerous caves, swamps, darkness and ominous colors, bleak, arid landscapes, descent to the underworld, being sucked into an abyss, attacks from terrifying monsters, and so on. The corresponding theme of descent to the underworld – of shifting from a sense of cosmic unity to the torments of hell – reflect the onset of labor during birth.

Life experiences and feelings reminiscent of this stage are helplessness, loneliness, claustrophobia, alienation, rejection, abandonment, falls from grace, depression, paranoia, oppressive family atmosphere, sense of meaninglessness, futility, and despair, situations threatening survival and bodily integrity such as warfare, injury, accidents, incorporation, and near-drowning. The angst of existentialism (cf. Sartre's *No Exit*) and the nightmarish, bizarre, and morbid features of the work of Zola, Doestoevsky, Poe, Hieronymous Bosch, Goya, Dali, and Petronius indicate the legacy of this stage of perinatal experience.[7]

The aridness of Luke's Tatooine environment, the attack upon him by the Sandpeople who ride mammoth-like steeds, the threat of the Jawas to R2-D2, C-3PO losing an arm, Luke's frustration at life on the farms (he ends one domestic scene in the farmhouse with the words, "I am going nowhere") are Stage 2 elements in the earliest part of SW. Then, after the destruction of the farmstead and the murder of Luke's uncle and aunt by imperial troops, Stage 2 imagery intensifies: There is the "descent" to the nightmarish, hostile underworld of the Mos Eisley cantina, populated by a wide range of grotesque creatures, one of whom has an arm cut off by Obi-Wan's lightsaber.

But even before this are Stage 2 scenes on the imperial command ship: Vader tortures a rebel officer, interrogates, confines, and agrees to the torture of Leia, and generally radiates malevolence as he expresses confidence that fear will hold the empire together. Leia's sense of despair at her imprisonment is conveyed by the hologram message, "Help me Obi-Wan Kenobi," which R2-D2 plays for Luke and Obi-Wan.

The incorporative, engulfing aspect of Stage 2 imagery is illustrated first when the Death Star's tractor beam sucks in the *Millennium Falcon* and then when Luke, Han, Leia, and Chewbacca, pursued through the labyrinth, dive down into the garbage pit and stand knee-deep in liquid and solid garbage, threatened with mastication and digestion. Luke is pulled under by a largely unseen, slimy monster that wraps around him and, when Luke momentarily surfaces, pulls him under again. This "Belly of the Whale" motif takes on an even more blatant uterine aspect when the walls close in and threaten to crush the quartet.

The themes of (actual or attempted) swallowing, incorporation, engulfment, mutilation, dismemberment – the oppressive atmosphere redolent of what the fetus experiences during the contraction phase in a closed uterus – is much more pervasive in *The Empire Strikes Back* (henceforth ESB, the second movie in the trilogy).[8] Luke, while patrolling on the ice planet Hoth, is seized by an abominable snowman, is hung up in a cave for future consumption, cuts off the monster's arm, and is put inside a dead wampa by Han, who cuts its belly open to provide shelter for Luke. Having escaped from Hoth, Han's spaceship, the *Millennium Falcon*, with Han, Leia, Chewbacca, and C-3PO aboard, flies into a cavity in the ground which coincides with the mouth of a monster, down whose gullet the craft flies before settling in its stomach. In typical perinatal style, the trapped characters manage to fly out through its mouth in the nick of time before teeth can enclose and trap them.

Luke meanwhile crashes on Dagobah and his craft sinks into an eerie , swampy, underworld place that gives Luke the creeps ("something out of a dream...I feel cold, like death"), where R2-D2 is swallowed by a monster lurking under the water and is then spat out. Reptilian creatures and an apparition of a subsequently decapitated Vader add to the horror. Onboard the imperial command ship, C-3PO is comprehensively fragmented and sent to a junk pile, an enduring fear for this droid. As if in recognition of the salience of the fragmentation theme, Vader, in announcing a reward for the capture of the Millennium Falcon and its inmates, declares that there is to be "no disintegrations."

On Bespin, "the pattern of capture, rescue, and escape becomes relentless and oppressive, until finally rescue and escape become impossible."[9] Han is put into a torture chamber by Vader, screams are heard, and then he is lowered into a pit and prepared for a living death, frozen in carbonite and destined for Jabba the Hutt. The infernal environment for all this is suitably red, black, and sulfurous. Red, black, and sulfurous fumes are the backdrop for the duel between Vader and Luke in the bowels of Bespin, full of pits, tunnels, voids, and grills, where Luke has his right hand cut off and falls into an abyss and down a chute. To the extent that Leia is a mother figure, her separation from Luke for much of ESB amounts to an abandonment.

The opening scenes of *The Return of the Jedi* (henceforth ROJ, the final story in the trilogy) – in the infernal, nightmarish underworld of Jabba, a den of black and red horror with a tooth-like entrance door – are perhaps the clearest expression in the trilogy of visions of Tartarus. There are a collection of repulsive monsters, notably the wide-mouthed Jabba, who eats a small creature alive, and the large-toothed Rancor, who devours two associates of Jabba before having its voracious jaws pried apart and then being killed by Luke. Han still frozen in carbonite, a sinister-looking bounty hunter, a disintegrated droid and a tortured droid, and the threat of a similar fate for C-3PO are additional elements in the theme.

The incorporative theme as well is continued when Jabba calls the thawed-out Han "Bantha-fodder." The threats to bodily integrity and the terrors of incorporation are magnified by the fate that is promised our heroes once they are fed to the Sarlacc, a man-eating pit in the desert, where they will encounter "a new definition of pain and suffering" as they are digested over a thousand years. This toothed orifice in the desert is fed at least five of Jabba's crew (on one occasion swallowed with an audible gulp) when a fight started by Luke breaks out. The incorporative grisliness of the vagina-dentata-like orifice is reinforced by a tentacle it sends forth to wrap around Lando before he is freed from it by Han.

In these ways, for sustained horror, the Jabba segment is perhaps unequaled in the trilogy, as it recaptures the most nightmarish elements of the second perinatal stage. Jabba – a vile fiend surrounded by demonic creatures and without even the stature of a tyrant – with gleeful, mocking sadism dispenses capricious, random suffering that seems to have no purpose[10] apart from inculcating pervasive terror and

reducing to dehumanised monsters anyone not yet at that level. Keeping with this element, elsewhere throughout the trilogy the Empire exerts its pervasive terrorizing power through robotic stormtroopers, who are the servant automata of a dehumanizing technology.

In another scene expressing Stage 2 imagery, Han, Luke, and Chewbacca are slung on a spit in preparation for roasting and consumption by the Ewoks. This occurs in another of those red and black, suggestive-of-the-infernal environments common in ESB and ROJ and indicative of the hellish second matrix. And as the story unfolds in ROJ, the Stage 2 theme of the fallen angel is kept before us. Nonetheless, the frequency and intensity of that stage's horrid imagery declines for the remainder of ROJ as the narrative moves more into Stage 3 and 4 imagery, i.e., engagement/struggle and, eventually, triumph. In these scenes the hellish red and black colors are offset with blue in creating the backdrop. These colors dominate when Vader and Luke meet the emperor on the Death Star and then do battle with each other. Significantly, indicating a movement out of Stage 2 helplessness, this time it is Vader's hand that is cut off. As for the emperor, he is hurled down a deep chute of the reactor core and consumed by fire.[11]

Finally, Stage 3...At Least There's Hope!

Despite the abundance of Stage 2 plot developments, as described above – and despite what one might think considering these seemingly impossible situations – Stage 2 experience in the trilogy is not marked by the sense of futility that it usually engenders. That this is so may be due to the equally abundant Stage 3 imagery.

This imagery revolves around titanic battles, volcanic ecstasy, oscillation between intense pain and pleasure, massive explosions, launching missiles and spaceships, flash discharges and high-voltage currents, powerful currents streaming through the body, diabolic war machines, cataclysms, massacres, orgies, carnivals, sensual dancing, crusades, conquests, destruction of cities and civilizations. Postnatal life experiences that relive the third perinatal stage include struggles, fights, choking, suffocation, strangulation, adventurous activities such as participation in battles and revolutions, court power struggles, infliction of pain, dangerous driving and flying, betrayal and intergenerational conflict, amusement park rides, wild parties, seduction, rape, willingness to endure great hardships to secure victory, and enormous discharges of destructive impulses and energies.

Though gruesome like Stage 2, Stage 3 is the stage of purgatory rather than hell. Although some of the elements are not easily distinguishable from Stage 2 (death, or the threat of death, looms large in both), here there is engagement and fighting back, rather than helpless suffering from persecution. Suffering in Stage 3 has a clear and definite purpose. The sensuous, volcanic nature of the output of Rubens and Van Gogh, the intense upward striving of Gothic architecture and El Greco's paintings, the exploits of Don Juan and the basic themes of Wagner operas are illustrative of how such imagery appears in creative work.

The most important themes of the trilogy fit fairly obviously into this stage. There is a heroic struggle of good versus galactic tyranny and evil taking place in space, on the ground, and within structures; rebel characters and pilots are involved in frequent chase and battle scenes; and characters are portrayed who have some emotional life. These characters stand starkly in contrast to the dehumanised, faceless, sterile, Fascist, regimented, droid-like, mechanical forces of the octopoid empire (Vader is described by Yoda as "more a machine now than a man"), who enforce martial law and maintain roadblocks at colonial outposts such as Mos Eisley and who devise two Death Stars.

To support the violent upheaval of Stage 3, there are numerous fiery explosions[12], including that of a whole planet, Alderaan, which Tarkin sadistically forces Leia to watch. Fiery explosions also take place in the battle for the rebels' generator on Hoth near the beginning of ESB.[13] Vader strangles several subordinates in the course of events and himself breathes in a labored, constricted way with the aid of a respirator. The *Millennium Falcon* can accelerate to light speed via its hyperdrive, and in ESB it and its pursuers have to negotiate a dangerous meteor field. The attacking missions that lead to the destruction of the Death Stars withstand ferocious pursuit and resistance from defending spacecraft and steer at high speed through a long and dangerous channel. The thrills and spills of the speeder-bikes through the forest of Endor are further obvious examples of this stage's imagery.

The oscillation between pain and pleasure, also characteristic of Stage 3, is conveyed not only by the varying fortunes of the protagonists but also in the struggle within the Force between its light and dark sides. This is expressed, for example, by the temptations offered to Luke's self-control, especially that of giving in to hate and being consumed by it when he is being zapped by the emperor's bolts of electricity. If applied to others and not the self, the power to control leads to the dark side, as Yoda warned. Likewise, Luke struggles between two poles over whether he must kill or redeem his father ("there is still good in him"). A struggle goes on within Vader, too, notably in the final scene on the Death Star when he turns on the emperor and finally redeems himself.

Individual combats include Han and Greedo at Mos Eisley, Obi-Wan and Vader on the Death Star in SW, Luke and Vader in their spacecraft in the attack on the Death Star in SW, Luke and Vader in ESB and in ROJ, Luke and the Rancor. Vader's betrayal of Lando on Bespin, who is then forced to betray Han, and Tarkin's betrayal of Leia when she supplies some information on the rebels and then has her home planet blown up, also fit this stage.

The dyadic interlock of the third perinatal stage, when mother and child cause so much pain to each other and are bound together in a situation both have to face, leads to situations in postnatal life where, figuratively and literally, blood spilt on both sides can mix and fuse, so that the partners of dyads are bound to each other in unsuspecting ways. They are motivated by the same forces. Examples of bound dyads are sadists and masochists, prisoners and guards, policemen and criminals, ultrarightists and ultraleftists, revolutionaries and tyrants.

The nature and danger (for Luke) of this dyad is brought out by the additional internecine fact that tyrant and rebel are father and son, by the way this is brought home to Luke by his seeing his own features appear in the mask of the decapitated Vader under the tree on Dagobah, and by the emperor's recognition that the rebel could, if turned, become an effective co-tyrant, channeling his destructive impulses into oppression.

Grof has found that many subjects who could recover Stage 3 experience, especially the final phases of the birth journey, easily identified with famous tyrants such as Nero, Genghis Khan, Hitler, Stalin. This gave them an insight into the mentality of the tyrant and its kinship with that of a child struggling in the birth canal and responding with fury to the infliction of suffocation, pain, and anxiety, and how they might (strive to) become tyrannical if the appropriate level of the unconscious were sufficiently stimulated by the circumstances of their lives.[14]

Among the characteristics of tyrants uncovered by Grof's work were extreme loneliness and paranoia. The loneliness of Vader and the emperor is strongly implicit in their portrayal in the films. It is impossible to imagine either of them in a domestic or convivial situation, chatting and relaxing with relatives and friends. That Vader is the favorite character with many children may have something to do

with their greater proximity to being in the birth canal.[15] It may be a response to the invitation to be the rebel part of the revolutionary-tyrant dyad (preferring Vader to Luke is a rebellious perversity common in children), but it may also be an empathetic response to two other characteristics of dictators, a feeling of inferiority, and a hunger for recognition and respect.

Luke becomes more like Vader when he acquires a bionic hand. Unlike many revolutionaries, Luke manages to resist the sadomasochistic, other-destructive and simultaneously self-destructive position this would entail. Still, the issue and the temptation to betray all is clearly presented. On Vader's part, he actually switches to the role of rebel and betrayer to the emperor. In ESB he apparently determines to save Luke's life and offers him the chance to rule the empire with him ("We will rule the galaxy together as father and son") if he will join the dark side of the Force and help him overthrow the emperor, which Vader himself, in fact, does at the end of the trilogy.

Stage 4: Deliverance and Triumph

According to Grof, imagery associated with Stage 4 involves expansiveness, expansions of space, visions of gigantic marble halls, radiant light and beautiful colors, entry into heaven or the Elysian fields, the final overthrow of a tyrant, triumphal scenes and processions, victory over monsters, majestic mountains and starry skies. Relevant postnatal life experiences include fortuitous escape from or termination of dangerous situations, survival of an accident or natural disaster, the end of a long and exhausting war, and the overcoming of severe obstacles by active effort to achieve signal success. The mood of this stage is one of liberation, salvation, redemption, love, forgiveness, humility, a sense of having been unburdened and purged, exhilaration, and warmth and desire to serve humanity. The sense of cosmic unity here has much in common with Stage 1 but is experienced in the aftermath of a life-altering struggle and a sense of rebirth. Hercules completing his labors, St. George returning from slaying the dragon, Theseus the Minotaur, and Perseus the Gorgon, are illustrative.

The mood of [Stage 4] is one of liberation, salvation, redemption, love, forgiveness, humility, a sense of having been unburdened and purged, exhilaration, and warmth and desire to serve humanity.

In the *Star Wars* trilogy, the starlit panoramas of much of the action in space obviously fall into this category, as do the numerous escapes from tight corners by our heroes, though celebrations of escapes are mostly fairly muted. The cloud city of Bespin has some of the relevant characteristics – graceful, lofty, light-filled chambers. The triumphal scene in the great hall, with its huge vertical beams of light, when Luke and Han are given medals by Leia at the end of SW, the street celebrations near the end of ROJ in the 1997 Director's Cut version and the rejoicing in the Ewoks' settlement clearly qualify.

The redemptive theme that runs through the second half of the trilogy (this includes Lando making up for his "betrayal") and blends with resistance to the emperor and the dark side of the Force reaches its climax when Vader casts down the emperor and finally responds to the good that is in him. Luke has successfully emerged from the struggle to learn to use the Force constructively for a greater good, in contrast to Vader's customary destructive use of it. The ultimate reconciliation of Luke and Vader is pivotal to the success of the whole rebellion.

As Han realizes he is free to develop his relationship with Leia, and the spirits of Obi-Wan, Yoda, and Vader stand side by side, exalted and smiling upon Luke and perhaps representing healing of cleavages in his psyche, the mood is indeed one of "liberation, salvation, redemption, love, forgiveness, humility." The most appropriate word is, perhaps, deliverance. The qualities required for successful resistance to

tyranny – such as strength, courage, and commitment – are the very qualities that can serve a tyrant well. And not the least of Luke's triumphs is, for now at least, successful resistance to the temptation that many revolutionaries succumb to, becoming tyrants themselves.

The war and revolution themes of Stages 2 and 3, experienced from the perspectives of victim/vanquished or oppressor/victim, need a Stage 4 resolution that restrains the triumphal mood which can, unless great care is taken, slide back into Stage 3 oppression by the victors. The trilogy ends with no suggestion that this is about to occur.[16] Luke had resisted the Satanic temptations of Vader and the emperor.

The Struggle to Be *Re*born

In conclusion, Grof's thesis that much human fantasy and behavior can be explained by perinatal imprinting is clinically evident and has been fruitfully employed by many in attempts to understand human behavior, notable among whom are astronomer Carl Sagan, philosopher of religion Huston Smith, and mythologist Joseph Campbell.[17] "Current transpersonal research shows surprising similarities between birth, death, shamanic initiation, the mythological hero's journey, certain aspects of schizophrenia, and psychedelic experiences."[18]

While the physical struggle to be born is a symbiotic conflict between mother and child, the emotional and spiritual struggle to mature is often played out as a conflict between father and child that leads to a different kind of deliverance. Indeed, as in virtually all other stories in this genre, real mothers are wholly absent from the *Star Wars* story. When material from the perinatal level of the unconscious emerges into consciousness, the individual can begin "the hero's journey." And in the course of it, he or she becomes intensely preoccupied with death and a dramatic struggle to be born (reborn) and to free the self from whatever it is that confines it – which at its base is the post-traumatic baggage we all carry from our childhoods and especially that first, biological, birth.

Some USA viewers of the *Star Wars* films have enjoyed a perceived analogy with America's War of Independence to explain the phenomenal grasp the Star Wars saga has upon the consciousness of so many. But in actuality the *Star Wars* trilogy owes much of its cross-cultural appeal to the way that its overall theme, its individual scenes, and the pace and manner of its projection recapitulates the experience of our births, in general, and in particular the way it validates the struggle we all experience in our lives as a result of that early imprint.

Notes and Works Cited:

[1] Mary Henderson, *Star Wars: The Magic of Myth* (New York: Bantam, 1997), p. 53, speaking of the garbage masher in the belly of the Death Star in "Star Wars" (henceforth SW, and referring to the first part of the trilogy) that threatens to masticate and digest Luke, Han, Leia, and Chewbacca.

[2] J. P. Telotte, "The Dark Side of the Force: *Star Wars* and the Science Fiction Tradition." *Extrapolation 24*, pp. 216-226, Fall 1983, p. 226.

[3] Frederick Leboyer, *Birth without Violence: The Book That Revolutionized the Way We Bring Our Children into the World*. (Glasgow: Fontana, 1977), p. 9.

[4] Joseph Campbell's monomyth of the hero is presented in his classic work, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1990, reprint, Princeton University Press). He describes a universally depicted mythic cycle which begins with the hero (representing the average person) leaving the sameness of everyday reality to be drawn into an adventurous encounter with dark forces (representing the average person's call to encounter her or his inner darkness on the path of self-realization), to do righteous and eventually victorious battle with these forces, in the process to become transformed, and then to return again to the everyday world, a renewed person with a "torch" to bring to the world.

[5] Loyd DeMause, "The Fetal Origins of History." *Journal of Psychoanalytic Anthropology, 4*, pp. 1-92, 1981, p. 8. Cf. Christina and Stanislav Grof, *The Stormy Search for the Self* (Los Angeles: Tarcher, 1990), p. 145: "Recent research has repeatedly confirmed and further developed the original ideas of Freud's disciple Otto Rank about the permanent role that the birth trauma and even perinatal influences play in human life. These findings have inspired an entire new field: prenatal and perinatal psychology." The likelihood of perinatal imprinting and the undoubted ability of some people to recall fetal experience even without the aid of special techniques is discussed by R. D. Laing, *The Voice of Experience* (London: Penguin, 1982). Laing refers to the work of Otto Rank, Arthur Janov, Francis Mott, M. Peerbolte, Frank Lake, Stanislav Grof, Donald Winnicott, and Frederick Leboyer.

[6] Stanislav Grof, *Realms of the Human Unconscious* (New York: Viking, 1975); Stanislav Grof, "Perinatal Roots of Wars, Totalitarianism, and Revolutions: Observations from LSD Research," *Journal of Psychohistory 4*(3) Winter 1997, pp. 269-308; Stanislav Grof, *Beyond the Brain* (New York: State University Press, 1985).

[7] On Petronius, see Ron F. Newbold, "Feelings of Entrapment, Persecution, and Depression in the Satyricon: A Perinatal Explanation," *Classicum 16*(1) April 1990, pp. 14-15. See too, idem, "Perinatal Imagery in Claudian," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 73*(1) Spring 199, pp. 7-15.

[8] For the darkness of this film, see especially A. Gordon, "*The Empire Strikes Back*: Monsters from the Id," *SFS 7* November 1980, pp. 313-318.

[9] Mary Henderson, 1997, op. cit., p. 60.

[10] Aside from punishing the disobedient dancing girl, Oola, and settling a score with Han.

[11] It is of interest that fire and falling can be symbols of the birth process. See Grof, 1977, op. cit., p. 303.

[12] "The Death Star goes up in an orgasmic explosion of fireworks." A. Gordon, "*Star Wars*: A Myth for our Time," *Literature/Film Quarterly 6*(4) Fall 1978, pp. 314-326, at p. 324.

[13] The alternation between ice/cold and fire in this part of the film is typical of the sensory oscillation that can characterize Stage 3 experience.

[14] The insight that tyrants could lead pitiable lives and that they were as much victims as aggressors has a long history. Plato, for one, made such observations. As Henderson (1997, op. cit., p. 156) points out, tyrants are often those who used strength and fury to master what they saw as evil but then are mastered by those qualities to become evil themselves.

[15] For children's identification with Vader, see L. Scicaj, "Bettelheim, Castaneda, and Zen: The Powers Behind the Force in *Star Wars*," *Extrapolation 22*(3), 1981, pp. 213-230, at p. 215.

[16] But David Ansen is right to ask, "What kind of government do the Rebels stand for anyway?" in "How the Force Conquers All," *Newsweek 101*(23), June 6, 1983, pp. 44-45, at p. 45. And the Nazi-style triumphal gathering at the end of SW may be a flirting with the possibility of future tyranny.

[17] See Henderson (1997, op. cit.) in particular on Campbell's monomyth of the hero. For religion in the trilogy, see P. Vardy, "The Theology of *Star Wars*," *The Month 20*(1), January 1987, pp. 14-18; R. Short, "Closer Still to

Christ: The *Star Wars* Saga," or "The Gospel According to Saint Lucas," *The Gospel from Outer Space* (London: Collins, 1983), pp. 45-96.

[18] T. Roberts, "Brainstorm: A Psychological Odyssey," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology 26,* 1986, pp. 126-136, with many references. The quotation comes from page 131.

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Recommendation

Behind the Scenes

Title: The Making of *Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith*
Author: J.W. Rinzler
ISBN: 0-091-89737-8
Publisher: Random House
Copyright: 2005

Reviewed by Sarah the Nerd.

Chances are, if you're a *Star Wars* fan you've already heard of or own this book – my own copy was bought from Tesco's, after all. It does exactly what it says on the tin: talks about the film *Revenge of the Sith* and how it was made. Chances also are that you'll find this book a good read, because it's packed with information and there's something for everyone – costumes, vehicles, quotes and lots of pretty pictures.

First and foremost are all the tidbits about character and plot – for example, a 10-year-old Han Solo was originally going to appear on Kashyyyk, and Count Dooku was supposed to be behind Shmi's death; there's still concept art and script drafts left over from these ideas as well. If you like studying the evolution of the story and character motivations, this book will probably be a great help to you. There's definitely a lot about Anakin written in there for a start, and seeing as *Revenge of the Sith* is his story, that can only be a good thing. For example, from page 167: "A new theme illustrates how Anakin relies heavily on droids and computers to target the enemy (the opposite of his son, Luke, who will use the Force)." If you want to read about the characters from the point of view of the people who created them, this is probably a good place to start.

Also featured is concept art – this book would probably be worth buying for the concept art alone, if not for the fact that *The Art of Revenge of the Sith* was released by the same author at the same time – and details about deleted scenes. Hopefully some of them will be seen on the DVD, but for others this might be the only official source that mentions them.

Then of course there's the documentary aspect, like "The Beginning" on *The Phantom Menace* DVD, you're taken behind the scenes. There's lots of information on the technical part of it all, as you'd expect from a book like this – how it was filmed with the greenscreen, how the lightsabre duels are done (not that everyone doesn't know that by now), ILM's work, and much more. And Steven Spielberg comes to visit again. Admittedly, not everyone will find backstage on a *Star Wars* film interesting, but a great many will. There are stills to look at, as well, from both the movie and from behind the camera.

Aside from anything else, this book really makes you appreciate the amount of work that goes into making a film – especially when that film is one of the most anticipated blockbusters of all time. The technology of it all is one thing, and then there's the story, and this book understands them both. You might well feel quite disappointed by the end of it, knowing that there'll never be a film quite like *Star Wars* again.

Discovering *Star Wars*

Susan R.

I discovered *Star Wars* in 1980, at the age of 14, while babysitting for a family lucky enough to actually own a VCR. I remember opening a generic case, hand-labeled *Star Wars: A New Hope*, to find a plain black tape inside. Even with all the negatives – poor tape quality, the kids running around, phone call interruptions – I was hooked.

Up to that point I had no interest in science fiction at all. *Star Wars* changed that. The very next day I went to the theater to see the newly released *The Empire Strikes Back* and left hopelessly in love with Luke Skywalker.

Waiting 3 years for *Return of the Jedi* seemed endless; I confess to filling my time with *Star Trek* reruns (which were new to me, but filled my sci-fi craving and made the time pass quicker). The premier of *Jedi* found me waiting in line with a whole host of kindred spirits. For the first time I was surrounded by people who loved *Star Wars* as much as I did. My new friends and I met many times at the theater that summer, holding unofficial competitions about who could see the movie most. It was an experience I'll never forget.

Since then I've found other friends to share my interest in *Star Wars*. Experiencing the release of the Prequel Trilogy in their company has been even more fun than getting in on the tail end of the Original Trilogy experience.

Issue 9

September 2005

The Making of a Prince:
Palpatine as a student of Machiavelli

by Reihla

"In order to become the master, the politician
poses as the servant." – Charles de Gaulle[1]

The full story of the *Star Wars* saga's most powerful villain, Emperor Palpatine, has only just come to light. The Original Trilogy painted him as a powerful figure, with Darth Vader as his second and a whole host of military power at his command. Even so, it gave very little information on the means by which he acquired that exalted station. Only with the completion of the prequel trilogy can we fully understand the dual nature of Palpatine and his alias, Darth Sidious. With the release of *Revenge of the Sith*, we can now be aware of how he came to power and the true nature of his leadership.

When people speak of Palpatine they often use the word "Machiavellian" to describe his manipulations. This paper will explore how applicable that descriptive is using Machiavelli's most famous literary work, *The Prince*. Scholars agree that *The Prince* is nothing so much as an analysis of the means by which political power is achieved, retained and lost. It is a handbook, of sorts, for rulers who wish to build their own empire. It is my intent to use *The Prince* and other studies of Machiavellian principles to assess whether or not Palpatine has truly earned the Machiavellian label.

A bit about Machiavelli

In the sixteenth century, Italy was a republic comprised of independent city-states. In many ways it was similar to the Galactic Republic, with various leaders jockeying for power and influence. Florence was among these Italian city-states and Niccoló Machiavelli served there as secretary and adviser to the Chancellery. When the Catholic Church – then its own political and military power – defeated the French in 1512 they demanded that the French-allied Florence secede from the republic and bow to the royal rule of the Medici family. Machiavelli, heretofore a servant of the strong republican government, suddenly found himself exiled in the face of the new monarchy. It was from this forced retirement that he wrote his best-known work, *The Prince*.

It was no secret that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* to gain favor with Lorenzo de Medici, the newly named monarch of Florence. The book – dedicated to Medici – is what many political theorists call "a handbook on how an aspiring dictator might gain and retain power."[2] It is ironic that the Medici prince did not find the book favorable and left Machiavelli in exile. Evidently, if Machiavelli's political philosophies worked for others, they did not work for the man himself.

[I]t could be said that Palpatine embodies the role of a machiavel in Lucas's epic. He is the epitome of treachery…

The dichotomy of Machiavelli's attempt to gain favor with the new monarchy so soon after the destruction of his beloved republic is, more than any of his works, the prime example of what makes his name synonymous with duplicity. Renaissance playwrights used his stereotype when they needed a model villain. This character, called a "machiavel," embodied the negatives of deceptiveness and falsehood. One such character in a play by Christopher Marlowe is quoted as saying, "I count religion but a childish toy, and hold there is no sin but ignorance."[3] That line is just as characteristic of

Machiavelli as it is of Palpatine. In fact, it could be said that Palpatine embodies the role of a machiavel in Lucas's epic. He is the epitome of treachery, and, as we are told many times in the *Revenge of the Sith* novelization, "treachery is the way of the Sith."[4]

Palpatine's rise to power

Early chapters of *The Prince* explain different ways a monarch can come to power – through fortune, through skill, through popularity (election), and through villainy. Palpatine, or his alter ego Darth Sidious, at some point in his quest to place himself in a position of ultimate power, employs each of these methods.

Machiavelli's most enduring advice to the prince is when he explains that a leader should appear to have as many virtues as possible while hiding his vices well. Palpatine implemented this advice exceptionally well by adopting a dual identity. As the Sith Lord, Darth Sidious, he was free to exercise options he could not as the Galaxy's most watched politician. Though Palpatine himself engineers a great many events, it was through Sidious that he was always able to control both sides of every conflict.

Power thru fortune

Machiavelli believed that fortune, or luck, played a significant part in the acquiring of any dominion. "Fortune is the arbiter of one half of our actions…she still leaves control of the other half…to us."[5] Of all influences on Palpatine's upward climb, Fortune seems the most rare. Very little was left to chance except, perhaps, for the role romantic love played in the downfall of Anakin Skywalker. Certainly, as Darth Vader, he proved to be one of Palpatine's greatest weapons, yet no machination of man could have guaranteed that young Anakin would fall in love with Padmé Amidala, much less that she would come to return his affection. The death of Padmé – though it could be argued that he didn't engineer it, it certainly was a vehicle for turning Anakin Skywalker.

Power thru skill

No one could argue that Palpatine wasn't a skilled politician. His ability to manipulate circumstances to suit his own ends is present throughout the saga. The chain of events has a common thread: Palpatine carefully creates every crisis, and then subtly engineers each rescue. Perhaps the greatest example was the means by which he became Supreme Chancellor of the Republic.

As Senator of Naboo, Palpatine manipulated the Galactic Senate to tax trade routes in order to raise funds. As Sidious, he persuaded the Trade Federation to protest the taxation by blockading Naboo. When Supreme Chancellor Valorum sent Jedi to end the blockade, Sidious ordered the Trade Federation to invade Naboo, thus escalating the crisis. When Amidala, Queen of Naboo, came to Coruscant to plead her case to the Senate, Palpatine convinced her that Valorum would not act to save her planet. He then persuaded her to call for a vote of no confidence, the motion that subsequently caused Valorum to be dismissed from office. Sympathy for Naboo resulted in Palpatine then being nomination for and elected to the position of Supreme Chancellor. At the end of the complex manipulation of people and events, Palpatine claimed the prize – the Chancellorship – regardless of the cost to his own planet.

Power thru civil selection/popularity

It also can't be denied that Palpatine was a popular leader. From the moment he was appointed as Supreme Chancellor he gave the outward appearance of a genial man possessed of gentle wisdom and quiet strength. It was precisely this reputation that allowed Palpatine to remain in office during the

Clone Wars. He had cultivated the trust of the people and a majority of the Senate and they repaid it by allowing him to stay in office far longer than the law allowed.

Those who come to power by civil means must always be mindful to maintain the support of the people because such support is crucial in times of adversity. Machiavelli wrote that among other things, "Whoever takes upon him to reform the government of a city, must, if his measures are to be well received and carried out with general approval, preserve at least the semblance of existing methods, so as not to appear to the people to have made any change in the old order of things,"[6] Palpatine would have done well to remember this once he declared himself Emperor.

Power through villainy

Toward the end of the Clone Wars Palpatine's methods changed dramatically. Much like Agathocles and Oliveretto, two examples from *The Prince*,[7] Palpatine switched to killing his strongest opponents. He arranged the execution of the Separatist faction, including Sidious's own apprentice and almost succeeded in killing all of the Jedi. Unfortunately Palpatine failed to achieve his objective in that he left at least two Jedi very much alive. This oversight would prove a strong contributing factor to his eventual downfall. Secondly, although he covered his crimes well and could not be linked to either massacre, he did not win glory directly from the downfall of his enemies. In Machiavelli's eyes, achieving glory from victory was the only thing that made a win legitimate. One thing is certain, though. Machiavelli would have admired the fact that Palpatine did not let morality or concern for life limit what he was willing to do to achieve power.

Founding an Empire

It is an interesting coincidence that Emperor Palpatine founded the same type of monarchy as the Medici prince – one that was formerly a republic. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli describes three methods for maintaining a newly conquered republic. Of these, only one really applies to Palpatine: the method of allowing the current laws to stand while creating allies among the governed. Palpatine allowed the Galactic Senate to remain in existence long after the declaration of a new Empire had made it powerless. Though still professing a love for democracy, he created regional governors to do the actual controlling of the physical territories represented by the Senators.

Whether or not Palpatine was fully corrupt before he became Emperor, is something we can only guess at. The fact that he was a Sith sways us to believe he was. One thing we do know. He was not satisfied with the power he wielded as the Supreme Chancellor of the Republic. Reasons for his dissatisfaction were probably many. It seems safe to assume that he wanted even the non-republic systems to bow to his authority. To accomplish that he had to create a dictatorship that could encompass systems such as those in the outer rim and the disenfranchised Separatist systems – those that didn't fall under the jurisdiction of the Republic.

Surprisingly enough, it was the power he held as Chancellor that made his place at the heart of the conspiracy so difficult for the Jedi to spot. Mace Windu says outright in the Episode III novelization that Palpatine is "not a suspect because he already rules the galaxy."[8]

Soldiers and military matters

Without a doubt, Palpatine's greatest Machiavellian achievement was the building of two separate armies and the engineering of a galactic scale war where these two forces would oppose each other.

In Chapter 12 of *The Prince*, Machiavelli declares that all governments should have good arms in addition to good laws. In addition, he insists that a prince must not "take anything as his profession but war, its institutions and its discipline."[9] He felt that both worked in tandem to keep order. As Machiavelli suggests, Palpatine eschews armies of citizens or mercenaries. Instead, he came up with two new types of soldiers, neither of which could Machiavelli ever have imagined.
For the Separatists, he selected allies who could build an incomparable droid army. Mechanical and emotionless, these soldiers executed any command flawlessly and instantly, answering only to their programmed commander. The droid army answered to the Separatist leaders who were under the command of Sidious' own apprentice, Count Dooku.

For the other side, the Army of the Republic was comprised of clones. Human beings created for the sole purpose of war and genetically engineered for loyalty and obedience. Though these soldiers served the Republic under the command of the Jedi, the hidden surprise was that Palpatine had a failsafe. When the time was right and he personally gave the order, Order 66, these soldiers would turn on and kill their Jedi commanders. The effect was devastating and resulted in the near extinction of the Jedi Order. For Palpatine, it meant the elimination of the largest stumbling block to his Empire.

The fall of an Empire

Machiavelli's teachings in latter chapters of *The Prince* insist that a despot must avoid being despised and hated. Those currents of emotion among the ruled only lead to revolt from within. Machiavelli was quite specific that internal unrest would lead to conspiracy and attack. Instead, a monarch should strive to be both feared and loved. Failing the accomplishment of both, it is better to be feared than adored.

The lesson of being feared was one Palpatine and those who serve him understood. By the time the Empire had been around for some twenty years we see Palpatine's loyal officer, Governor Tarkin, telling his officers, "Fear will keep the local systems in line. Fear of this battle station."

In the end it was not fear that brought about the failure of the Empire. Rather, it was the righteous anger of the people as more and more of their freedoms were taken away. That, coupled with such outrageously cruel acts as the pointless destruction of Alderaan, and the dissolution of the Senate made people more uncomfortable than they were afraid. The climate was ripe for the very thing Machiavelli warns against: revolt from within.

Though Palpatine had showed himself capable of exercising most of Machiavelli's teachings, he ceased to follow them once he declared himself Emperor. It seemed Sidious never feared losing his power and, thus, did not protect it as fully as he should have. In the end his Empire was weakened and vulnerable, much as he was vulnerable to the very individual who had once given him unwavering loyalty.

Machiavelli explains well why princes lose their thrones. Either they lack military strength, do not have the confidence of those they rule, or they do not have a loyal nobility. Any one single thing or a combination of all could bring about the downfall of the sovereign system. In Palpatine's case, the Empire was still a strong military force. It was the latter two factors that proved to be his downfall.

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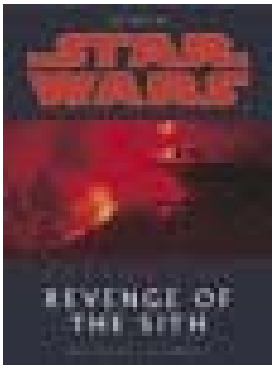
Recommendation

Pictures of *Star Wars*



Title: The Art of *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*
Author: J.W. Rinzler
ISBN: 0-345-43135-9
Publisher: Ballantine Books Del Rey/Lucas Books
Copyright: 2005

Reviewed by lazypadawan.

Every *Star Wars* fan should own a set of the movies...and a set of the Art Of books. From the great conceptual art created for the classic trilogy by the legendary Ralph McQuarrie and Joe Johnston to the wonderful prequel art by Doug Chiang, Iain McCaig, Ryan Church, Erik Tiemens, etc., these books gave fans the chance to see the evolution of places, things, and inhabitants of the galaxy far, far away. Fans could also wonder at what might have been with pieces that did not make it into the films. In any case, the art helped make that fantasy universe just that much more believable, with a rich culture that inspired beautiful works.

This Art Of book works as a companion piece to *The Making of Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*, which was written by the same author. It focuses on the production's art department, which got underway in mid-2002 shortly after *Attack of the Clones* was released. At this point, George Lucas did not have a script but had ideas of places, events, and new characters. It's fascinating to see the artists try and influence the story, which ought to surprise those who envision Lucas as a creative megalomaniac. Ian McCaig in particular had interesting ideas on what should become of Padmé in the film. In one drawing, she is doubled over in pain because carrying two babies strong in the Force was too much for her and Yoda stands by her, helpless. In another series of paintings, McCaig had the idea that Padmé tries to kill Anakin with a dagger after he has turned to the Dark Side, out of love. Once Lucas pitches an idea to his artists, he gives them a remarkable amount of free reign, as one could see with the wild variety of concept art created for General Grievous.

The art department wields perhaps more influence over the look and feel of this film than any other aspect of the production. Their work is seen in the sets, the animatics and visual effects, the props, and the costumes. The media they use vary from pencils to computer graphics. The artists themselves are talented and hard-working; at their busiest they were often working six days a week, even working all night. Despite all of that work, only a small fraction makes it into the final cut.

A great deal of that work however, is published in this book and in The Making Of... book. All of it is gorgeous, especially the digital paintings of Naboo and Mustafar. One can also see in detail various set pieces.

The only drawback is that unlike the other Art Of books, this one does not have a complete film script. Otherwise, it's a must-have for your coffee table whether it's the paperback edition or the pricier hardcover.

Discovering *Star Wars*

Arathen

I first saw *Star Wars* around the age of 8. I remember being in my grandmother's house, with my brother and dad. I thought it was weird, but sort of interesting, maybe. Later, my older brother got some of the toys and we played *Star Wars*. That's what really got me into it, and when I saw it later I understood it better. I loved playing *Star Wars* because I could be so creative; from what I remember, I nearly always made up a new character, always a good guy Jedi. It was loads of fun, even though my brother overpowered me mercilessly. Anyways, that is what I loved about *Star Wars* – the Jedi. I loved Yoda, still do. Obi-Wan was nice, and Luke was always my favorite character. For a long time ROTJ was my favorite of the movies. I loved the end fight scene so much! I loved the ideas about good and evil and how you can change (i.e., Vader).

So, naturally, having liked these characters, I loved Episode 1, saw it on opening day! I loved the Jedi, especially the idea of the Council. I enjoyed Episode 2 a lot, but I LOVED EPISODE 3! Gosh, I cried, it was so well done! Anyways, I love *Star Wars*. After being almost the same age as Ani when Episode 1 came out, I've grown and matured as each movie was released, which may be part of why I love it, I've grown up with it. Interesting, eh?

Issue 10

October 2005

The Return of a Jedi:
Christian Themes in Anakin Skywalker's Redemption

by ami-padme

The redemption of Anakin Skywalker in *Return of the Jedi* is the seminal event of the *Star Wars* saga, and the culmination of his complex and powerful character arc. By turning against his Emperor and Master, by saving his son and rejecting the Dark Side, Anakin completed his journey back to the Light after a 20-year detour through the heart of darkness.

Wrong-doing, redemption, forgiveness, and salvation are matters of great import to many of the world's religions, including Christianity. While George Lucas has stated that he did not base *Star Wars* on any one religion, his desire to spark thinking about spirituality in his audience allowed his movies to relate to multiple religious and mythological traditions.[1] Anakin's final redemption can serve as an example of how the saga connects to the teachings of mainstream Christianity.

It may be helpful to take a brief look at some of the terms involved in a discussion of redemption and related issues. "Sin" is defined as "a transgression of religious or moral law," as disobedience to God's will and the separation from God that results from it, and more simply as "something regarded as being shameful, deplorable, or...wrong."[2] There is no reference directly to sin in *Star Wars*, however, the "Dark Side" is a concept that seems to encompass not only evil-doing, but also the committing of actions that run contrary to "the will of the Force" (the Force being the equivalent of an ultimate spiritual power). The definition of "forgiveness" is "the act of excusing a mistake or offense."[3] It is something – a gift – given to sinners by other people and by God. Again, the specific term "forgiveness" is never explicitly mentioned in the saga, but the idea of it is repeatedly shown. The central term, "redemption," and the related word "redeem" have two pertinent meanings: first, in Christianity, to redeem one's self is "to save [one's self] from a state of sinfulness and its consequences" – a definition not specific to religion says that to redeem is "to restore...honor, worth, or reputation."[4] These meanings can easily apply to Anakin in *Return of the Jedi*, as well as to Luke's determination to help save his father in that film. Finally, a concept related to redemption is that of "salvation," which in Christianity is closely tied to the eternal life and triumph over death and damnation that Christians who are redeemed or "saved" are promised.[5] There is an afterlife in *Star Wars* that is considered the "path to immortality"; it is available to Anakin and other "good" Jedi, though it has not been clearly defined in films (in terms of exactly who can attain it, among other questions).

Looking at Anakin in Episode VI with a Christian perspective, one idea to consider is that even the worst sins are forgivable, and the worst sinners are eligible for redemption and salvation. In the New Testament of the Bible, only one sin is specifically mentioned by Christ as being unforgivable – blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.[6] This sin, which is sometimes defined as, among other things, "determined unbelief,"[7] has no real equivalent in *Star Wars*, but it is worth noting that Darth Vader never stopped believing the Force, and never spoke against it; in fact, he did the opposite, chastising and punishing Imperial officers who were derisive of his beliefs, and making clear he remained an adherent of his "religion" even in the face of the power of something like the Death Star. However much this sin can be connected to the *Star Wars* galaxy, Anakin would not appear to be guilty of it.

No other sin is called unforgivable – in fact, it is pointed out that terrible sins are and should be pardoned – and this includes some examples of particularly terrible wrongs. For instance, harming children is mentioned more than once in the Gospels as a heinous crime befitting a severe punishment. And of course, Anakin, as Darth Vader, murders children as part of the Jedi Order purge and the Tusken

slaughter, crimes that some audience members no doubt believe makes him irredeemable. In Mark 9:42, Jesus states that it would be better for a man "that a millstone were hanged about his neck" than he offend a "little one."[8] Still, it is never stated that a person who commits such acts cannot be redeemed if he is indeed repentant. Also, the story of Paul tells of perhaps the worst persecutor of Christians in the early Church in his days as Saul, who, after his conversion on the road to Damascus, became one of the greatest leaders in Church history, largely responsible for the spread of Christianity throughout the world. Darth Vader was "the scourge of the Jedi" and was a crucial participant in the destruction of the Order.[9] Yet, with his conversion in *Return of the Jedi*, he did what no other Jedi could do – destroy the Sith Order completely and restore balance to the Force, allowing the Order to rise again through his son, Luke. Lastly, Jesus answers the question of who can be saved when he says, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."[10] So, according to Christian tradition, Anakin's sins, terrible as they are, are not unforgivable, and he is still eligible for redemption and salvation.

[I]t is not the act of destroying Palpatine that gives Anakin redemption – he makes the right choice/converts, and once that has occurred there is nothing else he can do but kill Palpatine and save the day.

A second aspect of redemption to examine is the thought that it cannot be earned. People often struggle with this idea, believing that sinners need to "make up" for their sins, to right their wrongs before they can be forgiven by others (or saved by God). While such acts are an important for a penitent person to undertake – for "faith without works is dead" afterall[11] – they are the result of a conversion and desire to follow the right path, rather than what actually earns someone forgiveness or redemption. Christianity teaches that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" and that the saved are "justified...by His grace though the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."[12] As long a sinner is sincere, salvation is a gift bestowed upon the repentant, not a payment owed to him based on a tally of what he has or has not done. Both the 13th chapter of Luke and the third chapter of John state that inner conversion is the key to redemption and everlasting life: "Except ye repent, ye shall all...perish" and "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."[13] Also, Acts 3:19 says that once a sinner is converted, it is as though his sins have been "blotted out".[14] When it comes to redemption, what counts is sincere conversion and grace, not tracking various acts.

In *Star Wars*, there is the question of whether Anakin's "works" are "enough" to make up for the horrible crimes he has committed – even if the act in question was killing Palpatine at the cost of his own life, ending the Sith Order, saving his son, destroying the Empire, and so on. However, this may miss the point; it is not the act of destroying Palpatine that gives Anakin redemption – he makes the right choice/converts, and once that has occurred there is nothing else he can do but kill Palpatine and save the day. In any event, it is most likely his inner change that saves him, as there is little he can do to balance out the crimes he has committed in over 20 years of following the Dark Side.

Following from this point -- if one cannot earn salvation and conversion is what counts, then so-called "death-bed" or last-minute conversions are as valid as any others. This can be another sticking point for some who watch *Star Wars*: after spending half his life serving the Dark Side, Anakin's redemption comes mere moments before his death. How can five-to-ten minutes spent in the Light measure against the decades spent in Darkness? But in Christianity, just as there is no tally of good and bad deeds that are added up to determine salvation, there is no clock running on the time spent doing good or doing evil. The Bible recounts the tale of a thief condemned to die for his crimes, who showed true faith shortly before his death as he hung on his cross next to Jesus. Jesus responded to him saying, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."[15] The parable of the Prodigal Son tells of a man welcomed home by

his father with open arms, despite years of sinful and wasteful living; he was as welcomed and loved as the "good" son who had acted right and stayed with his father throughout the same time period.[16] Clearly, the time consideration does not preclude Anakin from redemption.

Another matter to consider is the role that other people play in forgiving sinners and helping them toward salvation. Anakin's "helper" is obviously his son (though at least one other person also believed in his potential for good – his wife Padmé). Luke provides a positive example of someone who "hates the sin but loves the sinner" in his dealings with his father. The phrase, often attributed to Saint Augustine, points to moral clarity about right and wrong, while offering forgiveness to people God loves and who may still be redeemed.[17] Luke has no question about his father's actions and knows he himself cannot join the Emperor or fall to the Dark Side. His clarity – even in the face of death at Palpatine's hands – serves as an example to Darth Vader. Yet Luke also approaches Vader with compassion and a determination to save him, and neither fight with him or kill him. He does this despite disagreement from Yoda and Obi-Wan, despite deep concern from Leia, despite the plans of the Emperor to use his caring for his father against him, and despite his father's own initial resistance. In the Gospel, Jesus exhorts Christians to love their enemies, however difficult that can sometimes be, and cautions them on judging others against standards that they themselves may not be able to meet. He further states that he was sent to Earth for the sinners, and he was often criticized for speaking and communing with known wrong-doers.[18] He said that people should repeatedly forgive those who have wronged them, and famously said those without sin could cast the first stone against another. Luke's actions in *Return of the Jedi* show him to be a model of forgiveness and compassion, and he is the fundamental factor in his father's redemption.

A final related matter is the issue of salvation and eternal life. Everlasting life and escape from damnation are promised to those who believe in Christ (the well-known verse John 3:16 states this plainly).[19] Anakin experiences an post-redemption afterlife, through a path referred to as "immortality" by Yoda in *Revenge of the Sith*. The Episode III novel suggests that only the selfless can achieve this state of being.[20] The fact that Anakin finds this afterlife is moving proof of his final salvation. Also of note is the fact that Anakin had searched in vain for immortality (for others he cared about) at least since his mother's death in *Attack of the Clones*, and had done many terrible things in pursuit of that power. In the end, he was unable to save those he loved, and his own life was ruined in the process. It is not until he is willing to sacrifice his own life, to let go and do what was right, that he finds the power to both rescue his son and defeat death. In Matthew 10:39 Jesus says, "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."[21] That seems to apply somewhat to Anakin in the end.

In conclusion, there are many parallels to be drawn between the redemption of Anakin Skywalker in *Return of the Jedi* and Christian teachings on sin, forgiveness, redemption, and salvation. These connections add to the rich storytelling George Lucas has created in his epic saga.

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[6] Matthew 12:31-32, *The Holy Bible*, Authorized King James Version. Iowa Falls: World Bible Publishers, 1989.

[7] *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*. Charles F. Pfeiffer & Everett F. Harrison, ed. 1962. Chicago: Moody Press. p. 950. There are different interpretations of what "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit" entails. Some theologians believes it refers to the Pharisees of Christ's day attributing His miraculous works to Satan (in which case, it would be impossible for anyone not alive during Christ's time to commit the sin). Others argue it refers to those that have actively, knowingly, and repeatedly rejected the Holy Spirit, leaving themselves unable to access the sole road to forgiveness and salvation. However, it is important to note that while the second definition leaves the possibility of a person committing an "unforgivable sin" more open, no man can know what is in the heart or soul of another, and cannot/must not judge another person to be in such a position.

[8] *The Holy Bible*. See also Matthew 18:1-9 and Luke 17:1-2.

[9] Darth Vader character databank entry from the official *Star Wars* website, StarWars.com, <starwars.com/databank/character/darthvader/index.html>

[10] Luke 18:26-27, *The Holy Bible*.

[11] James 2:20, *The Holy Bible*.

[12] Romans 3:23-24, *The Holy Bible*.

[13] Luke 13:3 and John 3:3, *The Holy Bible*.

[14] Acts 3:19, *The Holy Bible*.

[15] Luke 23:39-43, *The Holy Bible*.

[16] Luke 15:11-32, The Holy Bible. Also, for another parable that relates to "last-second" redemptions, see the story of the workers in the vineyard in Matthew 20:1-15.

[17] "St. Augustine's Letter 211," translated in J.-P. Migne (ed.) "Patrologiae Latinae" Volume 33, (1845). St. Augustine wrote "Cum dilectione hominum et odio vitiorum," which translates to, "With love for mankind and hatred of sins," often repeated as, "Love the sinner but hate the sin."

[18] Matthew 5:43, 7:1-5, 9:11-13, *The Holy Bible*.

[19] *The Holy Bible*.

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[21] *The Holy Bible*.

The Names of *Star Wars*

by Sarah

One thing in *Star Wars* that often gets overlooked is the names. Some are ones we recognize (Ben, Luke, Owen), some sound somewhat odd (Padmé, Dooku), some look like somebody hit random letters on a keyboard. Pretty much all of them, however, have some meaning, whether hidden or obvious – and contain clues to that character's future, before we discovered what their fates truly were going to be.

Let's start somewhere near the beginning: *A New Hope* introduces us to Luke Skywalker – the name is the first hint that he's the good guy. "Skywalker" means exactly what it says: one who walks the sky, or someone who's destined for great things. A fitting name for the central family of the saga – at least two of whom are talented pilots, literal skywalkers. Luke, on the other hand, means "light" or "bringer of light" – very suitable given his role in the story, as the one who brings light back to his father and the galaxy. (And, of course, the name Luke itself began as the name Lucas – no prizes for guessing where that came from.)

Leia's name, on the other hand, means "weary" not quite as good a fit, but obviously she's weary of the Empire (and quite possibly of Han).[1] Han Solo also got a relatively simple name: "Solo" literally means "alone" and "Han" means "he." Put them together and you get "he alone" and Han is introduced as a cynical loner.

Padmé's name is one rarely found on Earth (although "Padma" exists as a name), but it has a meaning attached to it too. Padmé means lotus, a flower said to cause dreams – appropriate considering that it was Anakin's dream which predicted her fate, and also that she comes from a planet associated with gardens and therefore flowers. Also, it is a type of flower that dies soon after blooming, fitting with what was seen in *Revenge of the Sith*. Anakin's name is more difficult; some people say it's completely made up, others say it comes from Ken Annakin, one of Lucas's friends.[2] But as the name has apparently been around since the very first draft of *Star Wars* (when it was spelled "Annikin"), chances are it was completely invented and kept getting re-invented until it ended up in the form we know it as today.

Pretty much all of [the *Star Wars* names], however, have some meaning, whether hidden or obvious – and contain clues to that character's future, before we discovered what their fates truly were going to be.

The Sith names are mostly somewhat obvious: Maul (mauled), Tyranus (tyrant), and Plagueis (plague...the beginning of the plague of the Sith?) pretty much speak for themselves, as does the name of henchman/droid General Grevious. Darth Sidious's name was made by taking the "in" out of "insidious," just as Darth Vader sounds like it was made by taking the "in" out of "invader." The fact that the names have a similarity, as opposed to the other Sith names, is fitting considering that out of all the relationships between Sith, theirs is the most important and complicated one – it gives them a connection.

Others have theorized that Darth Vader means "Dark Father" in Dutch (it doesn't, although it's fairly close). According to the Expanded Universe, "Darth" is the title the Sith Lords made from Dark Lord of the Sith, but as this is never mentioned in the series it was likely invented to give the name an "in-universe" explanation. "Darth" has apparently been around since the very first draft of what eventually became *Star Wars*, before the Sith had even been invented; Darth Vader was still called Darth Vader even before he was the character we know.

Another less well-known idea of where the name Vader originally came from: George Lucas went to high school with someone called Gary Vader. Could it be a massive coincidence...?[3]

Count Dooku, the alter-ego of Darth Tyranus, most likely got his name from the Japanese word for poison. Christopher Lee confirms it: "Not many people realise that dooku is Japanese for 'poison' – which is very appropriate, really, because he's lethal."[4] It's a good name for a Sith, as the dark side is something that poisons your mind and Dooku was once a Jedi. It's likely that his title of Count came from Lee's most famous film role, that of Count Dracula, another famous villain.

Palpatine – the now infamous evil politician/Sith who eventually loses his power like so many before him – may have gotten his name from Palatine Hill, the city where Rome might have been founded (by Romulus, in Roman mythology), and where many Roman emperors built their palaces. Palpatine's empire resembles a Roman one, a corrupt society which eventually fell, and Palpatine himself has much in common with the arrogant emperors, who rose to power using less than noble means.

Another politician has an intriguing name: Finis Valorum. Finis means finish or end, valor means courage or bravery; with his falling out of power to be replaced by Palpatine, an end to courage (as Palpatine could not be described as particularly brave) does indeed begin.

The first part of Obi-Wan Kenobi's name comes from the name of the sword belt worn by samurai, the warriors who the Jedi are based on. Plenty of thought appears to have gone into many of the Jedi names: Shaak Ti (a female Jedi glimpsed briefly in *Attack of the Clones*) means energy; Jocasta (the Jedi Archivist) was the mother of Oedipus in mythology – another story about fate. Qui-Gon Jinn's name is perhaps the cleverest: his first name comes from qi gong, an type of Chinese medicine. "Qigong relies on the traditional Chinese belief that the body has an energy field generated and maintained by the natural respiration of the body, known as Qi."[5] Sounds a lot like the Living Force, and is appropriate for someone who meditates in the midst of battle.

"Jinn," on the other hand, is a type of genie, convenient for the person who grants Anakin's wish. Genies are creatures neither inherently good or evil, and the discovery of Anakin could be argued as being either a very good thing or a very bad thing, for the Jedi and the galaxy in general. In The *Hero With A Thousand Faces* (the book which helped inspire *Star Wars*) the Jinn are described as "dangerous because they threaten the fabric of security into which we have built ourselves and our family. But they are fiendishly fascinating too, for they carry keys that open the whole realm of the desired and feared adventure of the discovery of the self."[6] Something pretty close to that happened in *The Phantom Menace*, as Anakin is separated from his mother, his only family – and eventually Anakin does discover his self, although it takes him a little while to do so.

The name of Anakin's mother is taken from Lakshmi, the Hindu goddess of wealth, light and fortune, known as "the mother of the universe" – and Shmi gives birth to the Chosen One. Interestingly, Lakshmi is associated often with the lotus, another parallel to be drawn between Shmi and Padmé, the two women most important to Anakin.

Other names are less rooted in mythology but still are worth thinking about: Mon Calamari get their name from a type of squid (and just happen to look like a squid species); a couple of the Neimodians are named after politicians; and Orn Free Taa was derived from "corn fritter." And of course, not every name means something or has a story behind it – a great many of them were probably chosen simply because they sounded good. "Owen Lars" sounds like the sort of name that a farmer might have, "Yoda" sounds old and wise, and R2D2 was just a combination of letters and numbers that sounded good (his

name wasn't taken from a film reel of American Graffti; that's just a myth, it turns out). And Chewbacca and Mace Windu don't appear to have much meaning to them. Also, (an addition of sorts to the third Darth Vader name theory) Boba Fett was apparently also taken from someone George Lucas went to school with, Bob A. Fett. However, that has yet to be confirmed as true, and most likely is just a fandom legend.

A few of the planets have well-chosen names as well: a dagoba (with an extra letter in the film, "Dagobah") is "a Buddhist shrine or mound containing relics of a Buddha or important manuscript."[7] Suitable for the planet where the last of the Jedi – one of the last few relics of the Force – lives. Geonosis sounds like "genesis," meaning beginning, and that particular planet was where the Clone Wars began. Hoth, on the other hand, sounds like "hot" – the exact opposite of what it is.

The names of *Star Wars* certainly give the story extra depth once they are looked into – up there with the best of other fictional universes where names feature into the equation. (*Harry Potter*, a world populated with people like werewolves called Remus Lupin and Fenrir Grayback, springs to mind.) They deepen the story's mythological roots even further, and give us greater insight into the galaxy far far away and the characters who inhabit it.

Works Cited

[1] The definitions of Luke and Leia's names from babynames.com

[2] From the Darth Vader entry on wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darth_Vader

[3] TheForce.net message boards: http://boards.theforce.net/message.asp?topic=5981698&page=1

[4] J.W. Rinzler. *The Making of Revenge of the Sith*. Random House, 2005, page 112.

[5] An excellent essay on Qui-Gon's name exists here: http://www.qui-gonline.org/features/naming.htm

[6] Joseph Campbell. *Hero with a Thousand Faces (The Hero As Warrior)*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968, page 7.

[7] Quoted from Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dagoba

Discovering *Star Wars*

Slychick6

No one else remembers the first *Star Wars* experience I myself remember – four years old at a New Year's party, a giant man in full Darth Vader costume picking me off the ground and me being so scared I cried. You might not think, then, with an experience like that, not only would I end up liking SW, but coming to love Vader more than any fictional character yet.

Since I was born years after the original trilogy ended, SW was always there, my childhood dotted by experiences like the Vader guy, seeing the *A New Hope* trench run on a SW toy commercial and getting excited, then sulking when I realized the movie wasn't actually on. The first turning point came with the Special Editions, seeing ANH at the cheap movie (an experience my sister rues me for to this day). Even with the crappy quality it was still SW in big-screen glory, and it was the coolest thing ever.

The Phantom Menace opening day saw me bobbing in my chair in excitement and loving it from the opening crawl onward. TPM began steering my love of SW as a cool action film toward the story of a boy, knowing what he'd become, that he'd grow up, fall in love, and lose all that – from then on, I've loved Anakin, and have more with each film. (Hayden's played no small part in that, much to my boyfriend's annoyance. ;))

Issue 11

November 2005

Star Wars: A Myth for Our Time

by Andrew Gordon

[This article appeared in *Literature/Film Quarterly* 6.4 (Fall 1978): 314-26. It was reprinted, slightly revised, in *Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth, and Ideology in Popular American Film*, ed. Joel W. Martin and Conrad E. Ostwalt Jr. (Boulder, Co.: Wsetview Press, 1995): 73-82. What follows below is an abbreviated text (some sections have been cut) of the revised version of the article.]

Star Wars, George Lucas' lavish space opera, is a fantasy for our times, this generation's *Wizard of Oz*. Nevertheless, whereas Lucas' film was almost universally praised for its costuming, sets, technical perfection, and wondrous special effects, its plot was largely dismissed by reviewers as corny or hokey, strictly kids' stuff. "The film's story is bad pulp, and so are the characters of hero Luke and heroine Leia," says Richard Corliss.[1] "I kept looking for an 'edge,' to peer around the corny, solemn comic-book strophes," writes Stanley Kauffmann.[2] And Molly Haskell sums up the critics' objections: "*Star Wars* is childish, even for a cartoon."[3]

Well, if *Star Wars* is childish, then so are *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Like Tolkien's Middle Earth series, *Star Wars* is a modern fairy tale, a pastiche which reworks a multitude of old stories, and yet creates a complete and self-sufficient world of its own,[4] one populated with intentionally flat, archetypal characters: reluctant young hero, warrior-wizard, brave and beautiful princess, and monstrous black villain. I would argue that the movie's fundamental appeal to both young and old lies precisely in its deliberately old-fashioned plot, which has its roots deep in American popular fantasy, and, deeper yet, in the epic structure of what Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* calls "the monomyth."

In an era when Americans had lost heroes in whom to believe, Lucas created a myth for our times, fashioned out of bits and pieces of twentieth-century American popular mythology – old movies, science fiction, television, and comic books – but held together at its most basic level by the standard pattern of the adventures of a mythic hero. *Star Wars* is a masterpiece of synthesis, a triumph of American ingenuity and resourcefulness, demonstrating, how the old may be made new again: Lucas raided the junkyards of our popular culture and rigged a working myth out of scrap. Like the hotrods in his previous film, *American Graffiti*, *Star Wars* is an amalgam of pieces of mass culture customized and supercharged and run flat out. He lifted parts openly and lovingly from various popular culture genres, but the engine that runs it is the "monomyth."

If, as Lucas says, he has studied myth and deliberately attempted to construct one in his film, it would be useful to determine how successfully the work meets mythic criteria. I want to examine *Star Wars*: A Myth for Our Time in the light of Joseph Campbell's thesis in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* that the hero of epic myth is a dream-figure who stands in for the entire culture. According to Campbell, the hero must descend into the infantile unconscious, the realm of sleep. "All the ogres and secret helpers of our nursery are there, all the magic of childhood."[28] There the hero gives battle to "the nursery demons of his local culture," and "brings back from his adventure the means for the regeneration of the society as a whole" (pp.17, 38). Symbolically, he becomes a man by rescuing his mother and slaying his father. Despite the Oedipal nature of the conflict, he is finally accepted by the parent figures, and thus discovers his true identity and attains his true powers, which he realizes were within him all the time. Campbell divides this "monomyth" into three main stages – Departure, Initiation, and Return – each of which consists of various steps, so I will trace the action of *Star Wars* to see how closely it corresponds to this traditional pattern of mythic adventure.

Typically, the hero is the orphaned son or royalty. Unaware of his true identity, he is consigned to a life of drudgery and exile. He is first called to adventure by a herald, signifying that "the time for the passing of a threshold is at hand" (p.51). The threshold represents a rebirth into adulthood; the hero or heroine must overcome the parents, who stand as "threshold guardians." When we first meet Luke, we find him bored and restless for adventure, but kept on a farm on the remote planet Tatooine by his uncle, who fears the orphan may turn out like his father. Luke is curious about this father, who his uncle claims was navigator on a space freighter. Later we find that Luke's father was actually a Jedi Knight, and, in the words of Ben Kenobi, "the best starship pilot in the galaxy, and a cunning warrior." The uncle, then, is the actual father – ordinary and repressive – while the Knight is the idealized image of the father. At this point, the call to adventure arrives fortuitously for Luke: a little robot appears, carrying a hologrammed plea for rescue from a beautiful princess. Symbolically, Threepio, Artoo's android companion, now refers deferentially to the boy as "Sir Luke." Like a Knight of the Round Table, he has been summoned to adventure.

The next step in this wish-fulfillment dream is the encounter with a protective figure, "some wizard, hermit, shepherd, or smith, who appears to supply the amulets and advice that the hero will require...The call, in fact, was the first announcement of the approach of this initiatory priest" (pp. 72-73). The wizard here is old Ben Kenobi, once a rebel General (Obi-Wan) and a friend to Luke's father, now a hermit in the desert wastes of the planet; the Princess' message had been a call for his help. Ben has supernatural powers: he first appears as a mysterious hooded figure, uttering inhuman howls to frighten away the desert Sandpeople, who have attacked Luke. And he is indeed a priest, last of the Jedi Knights, a mystic religious order which worships the Force, "the power which binds together the universe." Ben appears out of nowhere to save Luke, and he assumes the protective, paternal role which he maintains throughout the film. Like Merlin, he tutors this rough-hewn country lad, and hands him the sword his father willed him (in this case not Excalibur but the light-sword of the Jedi Knights).

Once he leaves the safe boundaries of the farm, Luke can never go back. As the attack of the Sandpeople shows him, the world is a desert place filled with danger, but only by abandoning the security he had known, leaving the womb of his childhood, can he enter the adult world. Luke at first refuses the call to adventure, but joins Ben when he discovers that, in his absence, Darth Vader's Stormtroopers have burned the farm and killed his aunt and uncle.

Of course, nothing in mythic plots adheres to the conventions of realism; it is all guided to fulfill the hero's "destiny." And what is destiny but a supernatural "Force" which arranges for things to happen? It is another word for the belief in the magical omnipotence of thought. For example, why does a chain of circumstances detour the little robot to Luke's farm? This is not chance – it was evidently predestined for Luke's sake. And why is Ben living as a hermit near Luke's farm? Obviously, so that he could be there when Luke needed him. For that matter, the death of Luke's aunt and uncle is arranged conveniently.

"Destiny" also helps to make Luke seem blameless: he does not seek out Ben, but merely tries to return the wandering Artoo unit to the farm, and, still loyal to his uncle, he refuses the call to adventure until he is left no choice. It has all been magically manipulated for Luke: his wish for adventure materialized and the obstacles (uncle and aunt) conveniently removed.

At the same time, our blameless hero is provided with a ready made excuse for rebellion in the political situation and the slaughter of his father, aunt, and uncle by Vader or his minions. As Otto Rank notes in *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, "the myth throughout reveals an endeavor to get rid of the parents," particularly the father; yet the hero, like Hamlet, sees himself not as the persecutor but as "the avenger

of the murdered father."[29] In fact, Luke has a careless habit of losing father-figures: first the Knight, then his uncle, and then Ben fall to the demonic Darth Vader (whose name suggests "dark" or "death invader," or even "death father").

According to Campbell, the mythic hero, once having stepped beyond the safe bounds of his everyday routine, sallies forth with the Wizard, "the personification of his destiny to guide and aid him." Now he must confront a dangerous ogre, a "threshold guardian" (p. 77). Here we have a series of threshold guardians: first the marauding Sandpeople, next a Stormtrooper guarding the entrance to the spaceport, and finally a foul-looking alien in the spaceport bar. In each case, Luke is saved by Ben, who uses either the Force or the power of his light sabre.

The next stage of the adventure, says Campbell, is the passage into "the belly of the whale" (p. 90); in *Star Wars*, the heroes are sucked into the enemy space fortress by a tractor beam. Here the hero symbolically dies and is reborn in the second phase, or Initiation.

The initiation consists of a series of miraculous tests and ordeals. "The hero is covertly aided by the advice, amulets, and secret agents of the supernatural helper" (p. 97). In Campbell's scheme, the endless corridors of the Death Star would represent for Luke "the crooked lanes of his own spiritual labyrinth," and his perils would represent the type we encounter nightly in our dreams (p. 101). Interestingly, among the typical dream perils Campbell mentions are two in particular: "Themistocles dreamed that a snake wound itself around his body, then crept up to his neck" (an obvious phallic symbol), and "the dreamer is absolutely abandoned...in a deep hole of a cellar. The walls of his room keep getting narrower and narrower, so that he cannot stir. In this image are combined the ideas of mother womb, imprisonment, cell, and grave" (pp. 102, 103). Luke encounters precisely these two perils after his plunge into the inferno of the garbage room. Meanwhile, he is aided by his various helpers: Ben unlocks the tractor beam to release their captive ship, and he fights Vader; the robots stop the walls from crushing them; and Solo and Chewbacca help the group shoot their way out. But Luke has passed his initiation; whereas previously he had passively relied on Ben, now he initiates and carries out the rescue of the Princess and the escape from the Death Star.

At the center of the journey is "The Meeting with the Goddess" and "The Atonement with the Father," both symbolic stages in working out the Oedipal crisis. The rescue of the Princess represents the former stage, and the death of Ben represents the latter. Luke's guardian, having fulfilled his function, seems to will his own destruction and is cut down by Vader; nevertheless, he does not die so much as he disappears in order to be subsumed into the Force. He persists as a voice which guides Luke at critical moments, like the superego, which Freud posited as nothing more than the internalized voice of the parents. Once they are safely aboard Solo's ship, Luke mourns Ben, and is comforted by the Princess, who maternally puts a blanket over his shoulders and tells him he is not to blame; there is nothing he could have done about it. Ben had similarly exculpated him after Luke found his aunt and uncle dead.

We can see here again how Lucas attempts to make this essentially Oedipal fable guilt-free. If myth is dreamlike, then all the characters are merely extensions of the wishes of the central character. Vader as destructive devil acts out Luke's patricidal desires, yet Ben, his good side, still forgives him and blesses him, as we all wish our parents to do. Solo, the apparently amoral loner, acts out Luke's antisocial desires for total independence; Luke himself is presented as dutiful and dependent. The ambivalence of love yet hate toward authority is thus successfully contained by parcelling it out among separate characters. Finally, the Oedipal desires toward the mother-figure are also kept in check by the inability of the Princess to decide between the two rivals, Luke and Solo.

Having symbolically met his mother and made his peace with his father, the hero, according to Campbell, has reached the stage of Apotheosis. He is now the possessor of the grace of the Gods, "the Ultimate Boon" which can restore his culture. This Boon is, of course, the Force. As Campbell writes,

> Briefly formulated, the universal doctrine teaches that all the visible structures of the world – all things and beings – are the effects of a ubiquitous power out of which they arise, which supports them and fills them during the period of their manifestation, and back into which they must ultimately dissolve...Its manifestation in the cosmos is the structure and flux of the universe itself (pp. 257-58).

This ur-religion is a basic element of all myth; the hero becomes the possessor of this ubiquitous power, or "Force" when he achieves adulthood.

Thus the mystical elements of *Star Wars* begin to make sense; they are indispensable to the mythic structure. Moreover, this Force, as Campbell explains, is not simply a religious power; it is also the power of the libido, and "its guardians dare release it only to the duly proven" (p. 182). Luke, having won through his trials and proven himself to his guardian, can now enter manhood. The father dies for his sake, freeing Luke's libido; as Ben tells him, "The Force will be with you always."

The Departure and the Initiation completed, the hero now begins the third and final stage: the Return. "The full round, the norm of the monomyth, requires that the hero shall now begin the labor of bringing the runes of Wisdom, the Golden Fleece, or his sleeping princess, back into the kingdom of humanity, where the boon may redound to the renewing of the community, the nation, the planet, or the ten thousand worlds" (p. 193). Luke, accompanied by the Princess, escapes with the plans of the battle station in Solo's ship out of the Death Star, out of the belly of the whale. He now undergoes what Campbell calls "the Magic Flight" (p. 196); he is chased by symbolic "demons" out of the Death Star, but manages with the aid of Solo to destroy the pursuing ships and reach the rebel base – significantly, a lush, green, light-filled planet.

Lucas has constructed out of the usable past, out of bits of American pop culture, a new mythology which can satisfy the emotional needs of both children and adults.

Having crossed the threshold from "the world of light" into "the world of darkness" and returned alive, Luke is now "master of the Two Worlds" (p. 229). He has the power to move at will between the two, and he proves this by returning at the risk of his life to the Death Star in order to destroy it. In combat, Luke now assumes his true identity, which is that of the ideal father: Jedi Knight, starship pilot, and cunning warrior. Guided by the Force, he naturally succeeds in his task, dropping some proton torpedoes down a symbolically suggestive narrow chute. The Death Star goes up in an orgasmic explosion of fireworks.

According to Campbell, "the work of the hero is to slay the tenacious aspect of the father (dragon, tester, ogre king) and release from its ban the vital energies that will feed the universe" (p. 352). His job, in other words, is the destruction of the status quo in order to permit renewal and restoration, and this is the task which Luke, ordinary boy raised to the status of mythic hero, successfully performs.

It is precisely this sense of renewal which makes *Star Wars* so appealing. In the absence of any shared contemporary myths, Lucas has constructed out of the usable past, out of bits of American pop culture, a new mythology which can satisfy the emotional needs of both children and adults.[30] The passion for *Star Wars* is akin to the fervor of a religious revival.

Each generation must either create its own myths and its own heroes or regenerate those of the past. *Star Wars* was released in a period when the heroes had been cast down through such national catastrophes as Vietnam and Watergate, when the lines between good and evil became cloudy, and when sexual identities were beginning to be redefined by the Women's Movement. Meanwhile, Americans found themselves living inside a kind of Death Star, a machine world drained of spiritual values, a world in which the individual felt impotent and alien. In the late 1970s, Americans desperately needed a renewal of faith in themselves as good guys on the world scene, as men and women, as human beings who count, and so returned temporarily to the simpler patterns of the past. Old superheroes like Superman were revived – and so were old-fashioned genre films like *Rocky* and *Star Wars*.

Such fantasies give voice to our deepest longings, and speak to our hopes about the future of our society and of ourselves. For example, in opposition to the dehumanizing uses of technology, *Star Wars* shows the triumph of good technology over evil machinery[31] – an updated version of the triumph of white magic over black magic in *The Wizard of Oz*. Viewers recognize that *Star Wars* has no direct relation to external reality, but it does relate to our dreams of how we would like reality to be. As the reviewer Jack Kroll says about the film, "It's the last chance for kids to have fun before they grow up to be Oedipus. And we hollow-eyed Oedipuses can, if we try, go back and enjoy the fun of our pre-guilt stage."[32]

"Kids' stuff," after all, is the stuff that dreams are made of.

Footnotes:

[1] Richard Corliss, "A Cool Look at a Hot 'Star,'" *New Times*, 24 June 1977, p.65.

[2] Stanley Kauffmann, "Innocences," *The New Republic*, 18 June 1977, p.22.

[3] Molly Haskell, *Village Voice*, 13 June 1977, p.40.

[4] See Robert M. Adams, "The Hobbit Habit," *The New York Review of Books*, 24 November 1977, p.24. Adams compares the appeal of *Star Wars* to that of Tolkien.

[5] In an interview with George Lucas printed in the *Star Wars* souvenir program (NY: S.W. Ventures, Inc., 1977).

[6] "The Force Behind George Lucas," interview with George Lucas by Paul Scanlon, *Rolling Stone*, 25 August 1977, p.43.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Stephen Zito,"George Lucas Goes Far Out," *American Film*, April 1977, p.13.

[9] *Star Wars* souvenir program.

[10] Brian Aldiss, *Space Opera* (London: Futura, 1974), pp.9, 15.

[11] Ibid.,p.10.

[12] Sam J. Lundwall, *Science Fiction: What It's All About* (New York: Ace, 1971), p.102.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid.,p.103.

[15] Richard Corliss, "A Cool Look," p.65. One might also note that heroic epics traditionally begin in medias res.

[16] "*Star Wars*: The Year's Best Movie," *Time*, 30 May 1977, p.56.

[17] Roger Copeland, "When Films 'Quote' Films, They Create a New Mythology," *The New York Times*, Sunday, 25 Sept.1977, Section D, p.1.

[18] "The Force Behind George Lucas," p.45.

[19] Ibid.,p.43.

[20] According to *Newsweek*, 30 May 1977, p.61.

[21] "The Year's Best Movie," *Time*, 30 May 1977, p.62.

[22] Jack Kroll, "Fun in Space," *Newsweek*, 30 May 1977, p.60.

[23] "The Force," *Rolling Stone*, 25 August 1977, p.47.

[24] Roger Copeland, "When Films Quote Films," p.1.

[25] Stephen Zito, "George Lucas Goes Far Out," p.12.

[26] Ibid., p.10.

[27] Aldiss, *Space Opera*, p.10.

[28] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (New York: World, 1956), p.17. All further references to this work appear in the text.

[29] Otto Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero and Other Writings*, ed. Philip Freund (New York: Vintage,1959), pp.71, 79.

[30] See also Roger Copeland, "When Films 'Quote' Films, They Create a New Mythology," *The New York Times*, Sunday, 25 Sept. 1977, Section D, p.24. "The modern artist, in a world which has largely repudiated mythology, found himself with no shared public foundation on which to build. The artists I'm discussing [Lucas is one] have begun to build on older works of art. Having lost a mythological tradition, they have created their own tradition..."

[31] See also Jesse Kornbluth, "The Gleaming of America," *New Times*, 24 June 1977, pp.24-29. Kornbluth says that "thanks to *Star Wars*, I'm temporarily inclined to believe that technology isn't soulless..."

[32] Jack Kroll, *Newsweek*, 30 May 1977, p.60.

Anakin and the Sin of Despair

by jedi-scholar

The image of Vader conjures up many different images for *Star Wars* fans and the general public. Fear, terror, power, and anger are all commonly associated with him. Before the advent of the prequel trilogy, one would be hard-pressed to find an alternative view of Vader or profess sympathy for him. As the prequel trilogy unfolded, our understanding of the tragic and tumultuous life of Anakin Skywalker/Vader deepened. However, few would concede that Anakin in the Vader suit is anything but a force of evil, a hideous monster to be despised. But there is another possibility that explains his condition as Vader, a possibility drawn from Christian theology – despair. As Vader, Anakin Skywalker dwells in a state of despair.

According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, despair is defined as "the voluntary and complete abandonment of all hope of saving one's soul and of having the means for that end" (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*). The "Sin of Despair" or the "Sin Against the Holy Spirit" was one of great concern to early Christians because as Baird Tipson indicates in the *Harvard Theological Review*, "Jesus had plainly insisted that there was one sin – the sin against the Holy Spirit – that could never be forgiven" (301). As such, those who die with such a sin on their conscience must suffer eternal punishment. But, the theology behind the "Sin Against the Holy Spirit" developed into multiple parts over time. Tipson gives a condensed history of this development, noting the pertinent biblical passages, the contributions of Augustine, Peter Lombard, and Thomas Aquinas, and stating the six basic facets of the sin: despair, presumption, impenitence, obstinacy, resisting the known truth, and envy of another's good will (304-307). However, he also notes that Augustine made it quite clear that no reprobate is beyond the mercy of God – "as long as a spark of life remained God might yet bring the most notorious sinner to repentance" (trans in Tipson 306). This is an important distinction because it lies at the heart of Anakin's return to the light side at the end of *Return of the Jedi*.

But before exploring that, it is necessary to continue looking at the theological underpinnings of despair. Susan Snyder in "The Left Hand of God: Despair in the Medieval Tradition" writes that there is an inherent paradox within despair in that "an awareness of and sorrow for past sin, always the first step of fallen man on his way to salvation, may lead him into such self-loathing that he feels – and therefore is – beyond the reach of God's mercy" (20). She notes that while excessive sorrow was once considered a deadly sin, remorse is necessary for repentance and offers as evidence John Cassian's "distinction between useful sorrow that works for greater perfection and a deadly kind that expends itself in unproductive grief and destroys the fruits of the Holy Spirit…One is humble, obedient, patient, and forbearing; the other is impatient, full of rancor, ineffective, irrational" (trans in Snyder 21). The last half of that sentence could certainly apply to Anakin in *Revenge of the Sith* as his anxiety and grief propels him into "irrational" and "rancorous" behavior. Indeed, I would argue that Anakin's desperation (related to despair linguistically) drives his fateful decisions far more than any lust for power despite what Obi-Wan says to him on Mustafar.

Like Faust, Anakin makes a pact with the devil, but unlike Faust he does not covet wealth and prestige. Rather, he seeks to protect the one he loves from dying. His pride in thinking that he can cheat death combined with his incredible rage and sorrow constitute despair. And that is what imprisons him in the Vader suit for over twenty years. This is not to suggest that Anakin's crimes are unworthy of punishment, but that repentance and forgiveness are always available for the truly contrite. Faust fails to grasp this truth in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Even though he swears an oath to the devil in exchange for worldly favors, there are several opportunities for him to repent of his sins and return to God. John

McCloskey in "The theme of Despair in Marlowe's *Faustus*" argues that Faust "succumbed to temptation because of his lust for more than human knowledge and power. But that is not the reason for his final fall. If he repents and begs God's forgiveness, he will yet be saved, will escape hell, and will avoid the consequence of his contract with the devil" (111-2). However, Faust fails to believe that he can be forgiven, choosing instead to believe that it is too late, and ultimately ends up in hell.

Anakin's despair grows over the entire course of the prequel trilogy. One of the sentiments expressed about Othello at the end of the play also applies to Anakin in that like Othello, Anakin "loved not wisely, but too well."

Fortunately, Anakin does not maintain such a rigid view; otherwise there would be no possibility for redemption and the story would end much like Faust's. But, Anakin doesn't just wake up one morning in a state of despair, nor does he desire such worldly pleasures that would lead him to make a pact with the devil. Rather, Anakin's despair grows over the entire course of the prequel trilogy. One of the sentiments expressed about Othello at the end of the play also applies to Anakin in that like Othello, Anakin "loved not wisely, but too well" (Shakespeare). Anakin feels very deeply for those who are dear to him, and that intense feeling can and does ignite despair when someone he loves is threatened or injured. For instance in *The Phantom Menace*, Anakin is concerned that he might not ever see his mother again. She tells him to search his heart to see whether he will see her again, and his response is not entirely positive. He says, "I hope so," (TPM). He then tells Padmé and the Jedi Council that he misses his mother, cries at Qui-Gon's funeral, and worries about his future when he talks to Obi-Wan. None of these inherently suggest desperation, but taken together they paint a portrait of a melancholy youth. Melancholy (an excess of black bile) is characterized by extreme sorrow and depression. It's not difficult to see the connection between excessive sorrow and despair for one certainly feeds into the other.

Unfortunately, Anakin's proclivity toward melancholy is further emphasized in *Attack of the Clones*. He is moody, moping, whiny, and prone to extreme bouts of sappy troth plighting as he navigates his way into Padmé's heart. His anguish in the fireplace scene, much maligned by fans and critics alike, perfectly reveals his melancholy state of mind. He tells her that he "can't breathe" when he's around her, and that he "wishes" he could divest himself of his feelings. After she rejects his advances, he appears crestfallen, and remarks that if their love were found out "it would destroy us" (AOTC). Anakin does not speak lightly; his words are always impassioned, always intense, always definitive. It's all or nothing for him, which is why he suffers loss so profoundly.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the scene where he discovers his dying mother. At first he's tender and loving, but as soon as Shmi dies, a maelstrom of emotions pass over his face and he becomes blindly enraged, slaughtering every single Tusken in the camp. Later on, he is remorseful, but his incredible anger, born out of despair for the loss of his mother, is a portent of things to come. A glimpse of that is also present in the battle of Geonosis when Padmé falls out of the gunship. Anakin is frantic, desperate to go back and save her, and Obi-Wan barely gets him under control. Although George Lucas chose not to give us an explanation on film as to why Anakin and Padmé decided to marry, one could surmise that the decision was born out of desperation and the fear of loss.

If this is true, then it makes the events in *Revenge of the Sith* all the more powerful where Anakin's overwhelming despair of losing his wife leads him to make his fateful choice. His fear of loss completely overrides his sense as he screams and cuts off Mace's hand, effectively choosing Palpatine over the Jedi. He knows that he has made a terrible choice, utters, "What have I done?" (ROTS) and

falls to his knees. From that moment on, Anakin acts as if there is no other choice. Even when Padmé tries to reason with him on Mustafar, he does not see that there are other alternatives. Like Faust, Anakin knows that his choice has consequences, but unlike Faust, Anakin does not get to reap the benefits of the deal he makes. His beloved wife dies anyway, and his incredible scream of anguish at the end of *Sith* seals his fate at least in his mind. This is apparent in his conversations with his son in *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return of the Jedi*. He tells Luke that "it's the only way" (ESB) and that "it's too late for me, son" (ROTJ), but it isn't too late for Anakin. His son breaks through his despair with powerful love, and releases Anakin from his torment. At the end of *Jedi*, all of Anakin's wrongs are forgiven and his spirit is redeemed by the saving act of his son's love.

Love is the means by which Anakin returns to the light side. Because his son is able to free his heart from constraints and release the love that was once there, Anakin is eligible for redemption, and as such his spirit joins with others who died in the light. This is akin to the Christian concept previously mentioned that God can find a way to lead even the most sinful to salvation if there is an opening (Tipson 306). Despair, then, does not have to lead to eternal damnation. It can be forgiven, but only if the sinner is repentant and recognizes that it is possible. This is exactly what happens to Anakin when he admits to his son "you were right" and states that Luke has already saved him (ROTJ). In the final moments of his life, Anakin is sorry for his misdeeds and recognizes that there is still good within him, paving the way for redemption. Twenty years of despair, imprisoned in a cage made from his wrath, impatience, and pride come to an end with that final act of love. And that is how we should see Anakin/Vader as a victim of despair, redeemed by love.

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Recommendation

Mythological Imagination and Analytical Psychology

Title: The Journey of Luke Skywalker: An Analysis of Modern Myth and Symbol
Author: Steven A. Galipeau
ISBN: 0-8126-9432-5
Publisher: Open Court
Copyright: 2001

Reviewed by Reihla.

C. G. Jung, the noted psychologist who revolutionized self-analysis, believed that all myths could help mankind understand subconscious and unconscious layers of the human psyche. In other words, a solid appreciation of mythology can help us in our never-ending quest to learn more about ourselves.

In *The Journey of Luke Skywalker*, Steven Galipeau applies that same Jungian analysis to the mythological aspects of Luke Skywalker's heroic journey. In this book, he offers one perspective on just how much the young hero accomplished between his introduction as an ingenuous boy on the desert planet of Tatooine and our final glimpse of him as a Jedi Knight at the end of *Return of the Jedi*.

On the surface, a detailed psychological analysis of all three original trilogy films might seem a bit daunting to the run-of-the-mill *Star Wars* fan. In reading *Journey*, I found that readers do not need any particular understanding of Jungian psychology to enjoy this book. The author has an easy, conversational style of writing and includes a glossary of commonly used terms for those uninitiated in Jungian concepts.

Galipeau, a confessed *Star Wars* fan, fulfills the goal he states in the book's introduction – to explore what the *Star Wars* story and its symbolism can teach us. He begins his study in part one, with a recap of the opening scene in *A New Hope*. Galipeau shows us a simple symbolic principle – the battle between masculine and feminine, and how the black-clad villain Darth Vader and the whitely garbed heroine Princess Leia personify this conflict. From that elementary beginning, the author carefully outlines the entire original trilogy. His is a scene-by-scene analysis that explores not only the central figure of Luke Skywalker, but also the other characters who contribute to his development as a mythic hero.

Galipeau's Jungian analysis runs the gamut from simple looks at the symbolic meaning of desert, ice and jungle planets, to more challenging theories like a comparison of Ewoks and their resistance on Endor to humanity's constant struggle for freedom from oppression. By the time part three concludes, the reader can easily understand a far more complex explanation of the deeper themes surrounding Luke's redemption of his father.

Following the conclusion of the book, the author offers a bonus chapter, an epilogue that gives a brief glimpse into *The Phantom Menace*. Galipeau touches on the child Anakin as well as the childlike symbolism behind the character of Jar Jar Binks.

Overall, *The Journey of Luke Skywalker* will find a satisfied audience in students of psychology and popular culture. By the same token, the majority of hard-core *Star Wars* fans will find Galipeau's analytical recap of the beloved original trilogy enjoyable and enlightening.

Discovering *Star Wars*

Anakin_Skywalker20

When I was young, I remember watching the *Star Wars* trilogy on television. All I could really remember was little images of scenes from *Return of the Jedi*. As I was growing up, my dad had rented the whole Trilogy and we watched Episode 4 to Episode 6 and I was just, "Wow." Then in 1997, I was drawn again when I went to see *Star Wars*, *Empire,* and *Jedi* (Special Editions) in theatres. A few years had passed and I found myself drawn away from that galaxy far far away.

It wasn't until I entered high school in 1998 and when May 1999 came around, that I had an idea that there was another *Star Wars* movie. I saw it with my Dad and my brother and I was like, "Hey! Yoda! It's Obi-Wan!" I was excited and TPM drew me back into *Star Wars*. I saw AOTC five times and thought Hayden Christensen portrayed Anakin very well. I guess some people forget how a teenager acts when they don't get their way.

Now that ROTS has completed the circle, I'm sad that this is it, but *Star Wars* will always live on forever. May the Force be with us all always and forever.

Anapad_Nabooine

I was nine years old in 1977-1978 when Mother and I were spending the weekend at Grandma and Grandpa's. On Friday evening, Mother suggested we go see this movie called *Star Wars*. I thought to myself then, "Star Wars?" I'd never heard of it. I was lukewarm at the prospect of the outing, but any time spent with mother was great and I usually enjoyed anything she suggested doing.

We drove or took the bus (I forget which) to the movie theater and lo and behold there was a line so long it was unbelievable! I thought, "What is this movie about? Is it really this good?" Mother said, "Let's come back tomorrow with Dad." We just couldn't deal with that line right then and if we did have to deal with it, we wanted to do so in the daytime with Dad.

So we returned the next day and the line was just as long, circling around the entire building. Well, we finally got in and sat shoulder to shoulder with the entire world it seemed. Suddenly the famous words, "Long ago in a galaxy far far away..." appeared onscreen. Then John Williams' first horned note blasted us, the opening scroll filled the screen, and my eyes and ears got sucked right into this marvelous sci-fi fantasy world full of humor and valor and a mysterious black metal clad "villain." I was completely enchanted and have been ever since.

TragicLove

I'm actually a fairly new *Star War*s fan. I had seen the OT at a young age, saw *The Phantom Menace* with my father, but missed *Attack of the Clones* when it was released. I liked the movies as a kid, but was never really a true fan until recently. My obsession with the saga didn't start until the hype surrounding Episode 3 began. When I first saw the teaser trailer, something struck a chord with me. Obi-Wan's voiceover, the clips from ANH and the rest of the prequels, and finally hearing the booming

voice of Darth Vader once again. Everything in the trailer had this really epic feel to it. This was the last piece of the puzzle, the one that would bring this whole story full circle. After that, I went back and re-watched all of the movies. I was especially enamoured with the love story between Anakin and Padmé. I could see how they, as Padmé put it, truly, deeply loved each other. However, knowing that they would not have the happy life together that they hoped for gave their relationship a really tragic sense. And so ever since then, I've been completely obsessed with *Star Wars*!

Issue 12

December 2005

Birth, Death, and Rebirth in *Revenge of the Sith*

by lazypadawan

Revenge of the Sith occupies a unique place in the *Star Wars* saga. It is the last of the prequel, or Republic, trilogy. It is the last *Star Wars* film released, signifying the completion of the saga and the end of an era for fans who have followed the series since 1977. Yet it is also the film that sets up the subsequent Imperial trilogy. The cycle ends and another one begins.

This makes for an interesting parallel with the themes of birth, death, and rebirth in *Revenge of the Sith*. The film features the birth of the Empire, the birth of Darth Vader, and the births of Luke and Leia. It also features the deaths of the Republic, the Jedi Order, Padmé, and Anakin, as he once was. The brilliantly edited sequence near the end of *Sith* shows how life and death are intertwined. As Yoda tells Anakin earlier in the film, death is a part of life. Padmé's life ends as her children are born and as the Anakin she knew and loved is subsumed into Darth Vader. For every end, there is a beginning.

The beginning of new life is the successful transfer of genes from the parent to offspring. Procreation certainly plays a part in the Republic trilogy. First, there is Anakin's mystical origins revealed in *The Phantom Menace* where he was said to be conceived by the midichlorians, created by the Force itself. In *Attack of the Clones*, the courtship of Anakin and Padmé – which produces Luke and Leia – is juxtaposed with the cloning facility on Kamino and the droid factory on Geonosis. As Paul McDonald wrote in a 2002 essay about *Attack of the Clones*, "The film is basically about procreation, and it is a supreme irony that neither the great clone armies produced on Kamino nor the droid armies being manufactured on Geonosis provide the galaxy with salvation. At a time when the Republic is being torn apart, it is ultimately the union of the young lovers on Naboo in a small, quaint wedding ceremony that bring about a new hope (1)."

In *Revenge of the Sith*, Padmé is pregnant with Luke and Leia, a crucial part of the saga fans had been anticipating for years. And once again, Anakin's origins come into question. The opera scene in particular is interesting because as Anakin and Palpatine are discussing Darth Plageuis's ability to create life and save others from death, the ballet they are watching looks like a giant fertility symbol. The large bubble resembles an ova, and it is made of water, long a symbol of life. The Mon Calamari swimming around and through the bubble have long streamers that make them resemble sperm fertilizing an egg. Perhaps it could be seen as the "conception" of Anakin's collaboration with Sidious to bring down the Jedi and the Republic. After all it is the conception of the twins that set the stage for Anakin's nightmares about Padmé dying in childbirth. Or, it could be seen as a sign that life will go on after the horrors to come.

The brilliantly edited sequence near the end of *Sith* shows how life and death are intertwined. As Yoda tells Anakin earlier in the film, death is a part of life.

From the middle act of the film until nearly the end, *Revenge of the Sith* shifts its focus to death. First, there is the betrayal and death of Mace Windu, then the execution of Order 66. No one is spared, not even the youngest of the Jedi. Night falls, and with the exception of the sequence on Coruscant where Palpatine declares himself Emperor, Yoda and Obi-Wan go to the Temple, and Obi-Wan speaks with Padmé on her veranda, the skies are dark most of the remainder of the film. Once the Jedi are dead, Palpatine effectively destroys the Republic by declaring himself Emperor. Padmé mourns the death of liberty.

Despite doing literally everything in his power, Anakin is unable to prevent Padmé's death. His actions even contribute to her demise. He is also unable to save his body from mutilation and immolation on Mustafar. He clings to life afterwards, but he will never again be the same. His body can no longer sustain life on its own. He is taken back to Coruscant and is transformed, reborn into the familiar villain from the Imperial trilogy. "Anakin Skywalker is very much like a post-modern Osiris, being continually dismembered and resurrected" McDonald writes in his essay "When All The Galaxy Was Young" (2). Anakin's destroyed body is reassembled with the help of mechanical limbs and machines that perform virtually all of his functions for him.

It is worth noting that the medical chamber where Vader is transformed is dark and womb-like with umbilical-like mechanical arms reaching down to him. Grotesque measures are taken to preserve Vader's life while the baffled droids on Polis Massa do nothing extraordinary to keep Padmé from slipping away. It is ironic that Vader originally sought to save Padmé from death, yet it is he who cheats death for the next couple of decades. It isn't through the power of the Force, but by surrendering to technology and becoming "more machine than man."

Of course, this was not what Anakin had in mind when Palpatine tempted him with the Dark Side's alleged ability to preserve life. He had hoped to stop the "pain, suffering, death" that he feared would happen to a loved one. Literature is filled with tales of those who sought to cheat death. But those who seek to avoid death through extraordinary means never succeed and/or pay a terrible price. In the paper, "Aging and Death in Folklore," D.L. Ashliman explains, "One of mankind's most persistent dreams is to postpone death. Folktales describe many such attempts, cloaked in a variety of symbolic garbs. They rarely succeed, even in the fantasy world… (3)" In *Revenge of the Sith*, Palpatine claims Darth Plagueis could save others from death but could not save his own life from his own apprentice. Physical immortality eludes Plagueis despite his vast knowledge of the Force.

Revenge of the Sith touches on another form of rebirth, and that is the soul living on after physical death. The Imperial trilogy already revealed this was possible, since the spirits of the departed appeared to and conversed with Luke. *Revenge of the Sith* explains it is a secret Qui-Gon discovered and could teach it to the still-living. Beforehand, the Jedi believed the individual soul was absorbed into the Force itself after death, which is why in the *Attack of the Clones* novelization, Yoda was shocked he could hear Qui-Gon's anguished "no" during the Tusken massacre.

The *Revenge of the Sith* novelization mentions that the path to spiritual immortality isn't the Sith's greed and manipulation of nature, but compassion. Most religions that believe in some form of existence after death teach that a positive outcome is the result of living a good life. Wikipedia states that "One notion of afterlife which is common to Judaism...most sects of Christianity, and Islam is that human souls go on for eternity to a place of happiness...such as heaven...Many religions hold that after death people get reward or punishment based on their deeds or faith (4)." Qui-Gon, as the pure mystic of the Order, apparently learned the greatest good is compassion. It's through him that the surviving Jedi learn the great secret that eluded Darth Plagueis. It likely involves surrendering to death when the time comes. Qui-Gon, Obi-Wan, Yoda, and eventually Anakin yield to death, choosing not to resist it. Qui-Gon tells Obi-Wan it is too late for him; Obi-Wan stands down and allows Vader to kill him; Yoda tells Luke twilight has fallen for him and he is not strong enough in the Force to prevent death from happening; and when Anakin is dying, he gently resists Luke's entreaties to hang on to life. He more than anyone knows the price one pays to try and avoid death.

We do not know what becomes of Padmé's spirit after she dies, but we do know she is in a sense reborn through the children who enter the world as she leaves it. Each of them carries some part of her. Leia

continues to fight for Padmé's political ideals, serving in the Senate and as a leader within the Rebel Alliance. Luke is Padmé's avatar in bringing Anakin back to the light. He hears her last words and unconsciously they become the focus of his quest many years later.

The end sequence of *Revenge of the Sith* reflects this view: "Each moment of life is a birth and a death. Joy arises in us and fades away. Perceptions come and go. A skin cell dies and another is reborn...(e)very moment we are born and every moment we die, and through it all we continue (5)." Padmé's funeral is in the dark, while Vader and Palpatine stand in a darkened Star Destroyer bridge watching the "birth" of the Death Star. Yet, the people of Naboo's candles reflect an undying memory of their former queen and her ideals. Dawn is seen faintly in the sky, signifying a new era is faintly appearing on the horizon. Sunrise breaks over the mountains on Alderaan as Bail delivers baby Leia to his wife, while the binary suns of Tatooine are on the horizon as Luke is brought to the Lars homestead. Amid tragedy, there is hope.

Footnotes:

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[4] "Afterlife." Wikipedia.com. 29 November 2005. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afterlife>

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Tall, Dark and Ruthless: the Romantic Allure of Darth Vader

by Reihla

I think most fans of the *Star Wars* saga would agree that Anakin Skywalker is a romantic hero. Youthful good looks, charisma, and confidence make it easy for women everywhere to adore him. His brooding vulnerability draws admirers too, as does his flamboyant Jedi skill – swordfighters are a favorite among the romance genre. The way Anakin loves Padmé Amidala, totally and completely, willing to give anything to protect her, paints him as the stuff of romantic legend.

However, long before we were presented with Anakin's story there were many who also found a certain romantic appeal in the ominous visage of Darth Vader. Web sites are plentiful in tribute to the Dark Lord of the Sith. Fan-penned fiction stories featuring Vader abound – a fair number of which place him in the role of romantic lead. His likeness flies off the shelves in toy stores on every continent and their popularity is not just among children and boys. It is clear that he has female fans everywhere.

If your first instinct is to question the sanity of these Vader admirers, you probably aren't alone. In the Original Trilogy we see Vader assume the role of cold-blooded killer, for example, when he kills Captain Antilles on the *Tantive IV* or when he ruthlessly executes Admiral Ozzel for spoiling a surprise attack on the Hoth rebel base. We know he is feared from one end of the *Star Wars* galaxy to the other. Now that the Prequel Trilogy is complete, we've even seen him engage in such horrific acts as the slaughter of Jedi children. However, while bearing in mind these merciless aspects of his nature, I still believe there is a significant precedent for the admiration that is often directed his way.

Popular romance author Anne Stuart is well-known for her novels featuring dark heroes. In a short essay describing these heroes she explains that her male protagonists are men "whose sense of honor and decency is almost nonexistent."[1] Though I feel Vader carries with him his own brand of personal honor, his crimes against others certainly fill the criteria of nonexistent decency. So, what is the attraction of the Dark Lord of the Sith? This paper will explore several possibilities as well as present examples of other similar villains who became romantic icons in their own way.

One particular point should be clarified. I do not believe that fan admiration for Vader is based on any sort of Stockholm Syndrome – the strange phenomenon that occurs when a victim, after prolonged exposure to their aggressor, begins to identify with him.[2] Nor do I feel it is any other type of deviant fascination brought on by extraordinary circumstances. Likewise I do not feel it is due to some bizarre adulation towards psychopaths, serial killers or terrorists in general. Those aberrations exist as romantic criteria in the minds of a miniscule percentage of the population, but I can't find any justification for applying them to the fandom that admires Darth Vader.

That said, there is one fictional serial killer with a similar cult following: In Thomas Harriss's novel *Hannibal*, the female lead, Clarice Starling, actually falls in love with the psychotic serial killer, Dr. Hannibal Lecter. Despite in-depth knowledge of Dr. Lecter's gruesome murders – cannibalistic rituals that epitomize depravity – Starling somehow finds a way to sympathize and identify with, even love, the brutal killer.[3] This turn of events serves to make Lecter the romantic hero of the piece in unarguable terms and has earned Dr. Lector the admiration of countless women fans who seem to share Clarice Starling's fascination.

Though I don't liken Vader to Lecter in most respects, it seems completely reasonable that if even a merciless predator like the good Doctor can love and be loved, then Darth Vader can too. The place

where Vader and Lecter are similar is, ironically, found in the fact that both have little patience for people who irritate them. I believe most people have been in a situation where they would have liked to be able to shed social mores so they could express their anger with people who displeased them. Watching Vader choke Admiral Motti, and watching Lecter hack up one of his captors brings us a sort of perverse pleasure for that very reason. We may even admire such men for their casual disregard of the moral limitations that define decency in society. Noted psychologist Carl Jung would probably say that both Vader and Lecter represent our Shadow selves in that they are the very person we each choose not to be.[4]

Despite the glimpses we are given of Vader's vicious side, and despite knowing that he must have committed many such acts to earn the reputation he enjoys, there are times in the Original Trilogy when his human side shines through. It is these moments where we pitied him and – before Episodes I-III – where we wondered about the man he was before he became the twisted and evil half-machine that Ben Kenobi insists must be destroyed. These moments are brief, but significant. For example, the hand Vader places on Leia's shoulder as Tarkin orders the destruction of Alderaan. Fans have speculated endlessly that it seems almost a sympathetic gesture. At the very least he could be protecting her from repercussions were she to lash out at Tarkin. Then, when the Emperor orders Vader to kill Luke, he instantly protests by insisting, "He's just a boy!" His immediate reluctance to agree to kill his own son hints at the humanity that we suspected might still live in his heart.

Obviously Vader is not a stereotypical romantic figure. I propose that fiction through the ages is filled with romantic figures who do not fit the traditional "tall, dark and handsome" criteria, but who nevertheless drew the empathy and even affection of the female audience.

It could be argued that Vader is a monster of much the same ilk as Quasimodo in Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* – disfigured and terrifying, answering to none but his master while being kept imprisoned in his lonely tower.[5] The equally tragic Erik in *Phantom of the Opera* comes across in much the same way, isolated and scarred, with the Opera house as his prison. All three men are wounded physically and emotionally, and all share the distinction that their love for a woman leads them to horrendous acts.[6]

Another character who could be called similar to Vader, famous both for his evilness and his attractiveness to women, is Count Dracula. All of the various actors who played Dracula in Hollywood films, from Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee to Frank Langella and Gary Oldman, have received scores of amorous fan letters from admirers. Popular authors of vampire fiction, such as Anne Rice, can place their success at the feet of a fan base that, at its roots, grew from a fascination with Dracula to the point that they now show a cultish devotion to all these creatures of darkness.

One cinematic version of *Dracula*, the Francis Ford Coppola film, gives us a look at Vlad Dracul that shows him as having definite similarities to Vader. David Glover, a prominent Dracula scholar, explains that "It is therefore the vampire's redemption that is at stake here, rather than his exorcism. At root, Coppola's *Dracula* is a tale of spiritual exile…a circular story of sacrifice and salvation through undying human love..."[7] We definitely see those elements at the conclusion of the *Star Wars* saga when Vader sacrifices himself to save his son and is redeemed in the process.

A somewhat similar observation is found in an analysis by Dr. Jeffrey Chown: "We see Prince Vlad Dracul as an exile from the kingdom of God, something akin to Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. His blasphemous rage against a Christian God over the death of his wife transforms him into the undead

wanderer..."[8] Certainly Anakin Skywalker's transformation from Jedi to Sith makes him an exile and his outrage at Padmé's death couldn't help but contribute to the walking horror he becomes.

Having explored Vader in terms of non-traditional romantic heroes I'd like to take a moment to look at him in a more traditional light. Modern romantic fiction is increasingly popular and has at its heart some basic criteria for what women find attractive in a male romantic lead. In the book *The Complete Writer's Guide to Heroes and Heroines* three published romantic novel writers have explored these characteristics and divided them into eight proposed archetypes.[9] After reading them carefully, I think Vader could be said to fall into three of the eight categories.

The first, the Chief, is at or near the top of his career field. As right-hand to the Emperor, clearly Vader fits that criterion. Personality traits of a Chief include being overbearing, inflexible and irritated by the incompetence of others. The authors say his motto is akin to "Do something or get out of the way!" This is a challenge that *Star Wars* fans might easily imagine Darth Vader, or Anakin Skywalker, issuing. The Chief's first reaction to most uncomfortable situations is anger, something we see frequently from Vader.

The second, the Bad Boy, is a rebel who detests authority. We see this more in the prequel portrayal of Anakin Skywalker, but there were hints of this in the Vader of the Original Trilogy, as well. It was obvious that his service to his Master is compulsory when he tells Luke that they can overthrow the Emperor together. A Bad Boy may also be bitter and volatile with a reputation for being physical with those who draw his ire. In reality, his anger at the world may mark him as a disillusioned idealist – a label that definitely applies to Anakin with our newfound prequel knowledge. This is particularly true if one believes it is a typical masculine trait to express nearly all emotions (fear, depression, guilt, frustration) outwardly as anger.

The last archetype similar to Vader is the Lost Soul. This man is an outcast, working in isolation. In the years since he was placed in his life-support suit Vader has definitely found himself alone. A Lost Soul is oftentimes shown as secretive, brooding, or tortured and, knowing his past, it is now difficult to see Vader any other way. The life of a Lost Soul might have been filled with many despairing events, so he is likely to be both unforgiving and vulnerable. As a trademark, the Lost Soul has few, if any, friends.

The key to accepting and loving a dark romantic hero falls into these three archetypes. Even if Vader has done truly evil things, as long as a reader can accept his motivations and buy that his bad behavior has its origins in duty, loyalty, pain or honor, he can be sympathized with and even forgiven.

Even if Vader has done truly evil things, as long as a reader can accept his motivations and buy that his bad behavior has its origins in duty, loyalty, pain or honor, he can be sympathized with and even forgiven.

Many things about Darth Vader could be called attractive to women. He is strong and confident, well spoken and intelligent. He exudes authority and power. He is the quintessential outlaw brandishing a sword. He wears black leather, a flowing cloak and a mask to hide his face. He speaks with a deep, sexy voice and shows the world a dark, inscrutable visage. These are things that fire the romantic imagination and women who love larger-than-life romance cannot help but be drawn to him.

In addition, women know he is wounded, which caters to the innate feminine desire to heal. Since the conclusion of the prequel trilogy, we are now aware that Vader lives forever in the blackest moment of

his life – the instant he discovered that Padmé was dead by what he believes was his own hand. His heart bears the scars of this knowledge, and the burden has left him without hope, little more than a slave to a master he has vowed to serve.

Even before fandom learned about Anakin Skywalker's humble slave origins...even before we discovered that he had to leave his mother at a tender age, even before we watched him grow and learn in relative isolation, women loved Vader for the tragedies he must have suffered on the road to becoming a Sith Lord. Surely a man who could father such wonderful and heroic children as Leia and Luke would have himself been a wonderful person had heartbreaking circumstance not intervened?

Deep down a woman's romantic heart knows that, though Vader is tragically flawed, he can still be redeemed. In fact, imagining what it would be like to be the one to rescue such a man, to make him react in a powerful, volatile fashion is the essence of romantic daydreams. A true romantic might imagine herself as the one to draw the Sith Lord out from his self-imposed isolation, to force him to acknowledge that he actually *feels*. In short, it is this desire to save Vader from himself that leads women everywhere, myself included, to cheer endlessly when Luke accomplishes just that. His redemption proves we were right all along; our admiration was not misplaced.

Though seeing Vader in a romantic light might seem farfetched to some, in the end he is the ultimate hero of the saga, redeemed by love from sins that seemed unforgivable.

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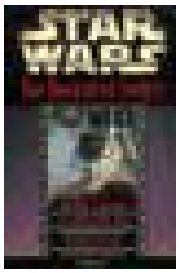
Recommendation

Script Evolutions



Title: *Star Wars*: The Annotated Screenplays
Author: Laurent Bouzereau
ISBN: 0-345-40981-7
Publisher: Ballantine Books
Copyright: 1997

Reviewed by Lady Aeryn.

A long time ago at a desk very far away, a twenty-something Southern California film director began penning the first drafts of an epic that would turn out to be over thirty years in the making. *Star Wars: The Annotated Screenplays* is an excellent overview of the evolution of the first half of that journey.

The Annotated Screenplays is more or less a DVD commentary of *A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi* set to paper, with the added luxury of having room to delve into more detail than a film-length audio commentary allows. It contains the full-length final screenplays for all three films (with the occasional sidebar reflecting a change from the original cut in the 1997 Special Editions), heavily annotated throughout with background information and insights on the evolution of film scenes from draft to draft and from final draft to screen. Most of this information comes directly from George Lucas's own original notes and script drafts, as well as the author's interviews with Lucas himself and others – directors, special effects designers, concept artists – who worked on the trilogy.

The section for *A New Hope* is possibly the most revealing, showing the evolution from Lucas's original handwritten story ideas to what became the final film version of Episode IV. One begins to be able to grasp just how radically different the saga we've come to know could have been if this first step had evolved even slightly differently. If Darth Vader had remained the minor, bitter Imperial general he was in the first draft, if Han Solo had still been a green-gilled alien, if Leia had remained only a bit character, if the story had ended up being told solely through the eyes of C-3P0 and R2-D2. This is not to say, however, that the other two screenplays are dull by comparison in the insights they offer. *Empire*'s includes gems like the lost Skywalker sister originally being an entirely new character, of Luke's father being a completely separate entity from Darth Vader (even appearing as a ghost to Luke in the first draft), and *Jedi*'s discusses the original concepts for the Emperor's base planet being a planet much like Mustafar in *Revenge of the Sith*, and the various discussed possible outcomes – many of them rather bleak – for the Luke/Vader duel.

Perhaps the biggest drawback of this book is the lack of any pictures or concept illustrations to supplement the annotations – but it's not a crippling lack, and much of the concept art is already readily available in separate existing publications. Also, since this book was published in 1997, well before even *The Phantom Menace* was completed, it now almost begs for a revised version incorporating insights on the even further changes to ANH/TESB/ROTJ and their updated place in the saga as a result of the finished prequel movies – or even a set of Annotated Screenplays for the saga as a whole. Again, though, this is not a crippling lack, and the book still stands remarkably well without the benefit of the prequels. In its own way, it's still interesting to look back now at the hints in this book of what Lucas had in mind for the prequel storyline in the early '90s and seeing how it compared to what ended up onscreen.

This book is a must for any *Star Wars* fan interested in the behind the scenes evolution of the saga or anyone simply wanting to look a little bit beyond what we're shown on the screen. It's easily found online, or at your local bookstore/library.

Discovering *Star Wars*

jedi-scholar

In 1977, I was nine and unaware a phenomenon called *Star Wars* existed. But that changed during my family's vacation, when we decided to see a movie together. I headed to the theater filled with dread…because my stepbrother was keenly interested in *Star Wars*, I knew it'd be awful – after all, seeing *Jaws* on his recommendation left me with nightmares about man-eating sharks!

I cried, begged, and pleaded not to see the "scary" movie and my prayers were answered when *Star Wars* was sold out. My mother bought us a *Star Wars* souvenir booklet and all thoughts of the film were forgotten until the next morning. I bravely looked at the booklet, discovering to great astonishment that *Star Wars* wasn't scary at all. In fact, it was so intriguing I read the booklet several times and decided I had to see this movie!!!

I soon asked for the *Star Wars* novelization, and holding that magical paperback with its shiny cover…I knew I was in for a treat. I read it rapidly, ingesting every strange detail, completely entranced. Upon finishing, I begged to see the movie. After several days that seemed like weeks, I saw *Star Wars*. Even now, I remember what it felt like to see that giant Imperial ship looming onscreen…

From then, I was hooked, seeing it many more times and even having my room outfitted in *Star Wars* wallpaper. *Star Wars* has been part of my life for 28 years; I cannot imagine life without it.

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Saga Journal
Volume 1, 2005
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